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THE CORRESPONDENCE

OF

HORACE WALPOLE,

EARL OF ORFORD,

AND THE

REV. WILLIAM MASON.

NOW FIRST PUBLISHED FROM THE ORIGINAL MSS.

EDITED, WITH NOTES,

BY THE REV. J. MITFORD.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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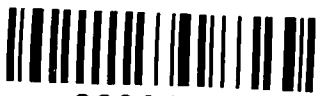

TO

THE REV. WILLIAM ALDERSON, M.A.

RECTOR OF ASTON.

THESE VOLUMES

ARE

IN GRATITUDE AND RESPECT

INSCRIBED

BY THE EDITOR.

PREFACE.

THE Letters of Mason, now first printed, formed part of the Collection of Manuscripts purchased of the Duke of Grafton, as executor of the late Earl of Waldegrave, and were entrusted to me for publication; and while I was lamenting the imperfect manner in which they would appear, from want of the answers of the correspondent, my friend, Archdeacon Burney informed me that the corresponding Letters of Walpole were carefully, and in their entire form, preserved at the Rectory House at Aston. The Introduction which I obtained from him was most kindly received by Mr. Alderson,* the present possessor of the place, and with a liberality for which my thanks are now to be paid, he allowed me the use of the volumes, that for more than half a century had

* The Rev. Ch. Alderson was Mason's intimate friend and sole executor, and succeeded him in the rectory of Aston, which was subsequently possessed by his son, the present rector.

been under the safe protection of his father and himself. I do not think that any other in the long series of Walpole's Epistolary Works exceeds them in general interest; and in the information which relates to literature, they perhaps excel them all. Numerous as may be the letters of a writer, yet as they vary according to the character of the correspondent, taking much of their tone and subject from him, a repetition of the same topics or sentiments may without difficulty be avoided, and in the present case such an objection cannot reasonably be made.

I will now briefly offer some remarks on those subjects, which appear most prominently, and of most permanent interest in these Letters; on others, I have, where it seemed requisite, made a few observations in the Notes, but from circumstances connected with my professional engagements, over which I had no control, that portion of the book is less perfect than I could have wished; in some cases, however, the readers will be able to supply themselves with original information; in others, they may derive assistance from the learned Editors of Works by Walpole previously published, and perhaps what they will find in these volumes, may not be altogether without its use.

One subject discussed in the earlier part of the Correspondence will not fail to attract attention, as it appears to afford a clearer and more authentic statement of the cause of the well known differences which arose between Gray and Walpole, when on their youthful travels, and

of their consequent separation in Italy. This was a matter of some delicacy to lay open to the public view, and yet it could not be silently passed over. The confession of Walpole in these letters is frank and undisguised,—and his representation of their uncongenial habits, and peculiarities of temper on either side, is quite sufficient to account for the unfortunate result; but this was so softened in Mason's Narrative, and passed over with so light a touch, and in such general terms, as to tempt those who were interested in the subject to suppose that the more important causes still remained unexplained. The warmth and affection of their early friendship was unfortunately never renewed, and their paths of life were for the future removed from each other. It would not, however, be just to Walpole's reputation, or a fair return to the candour of his confessions, to leave an impression on the reader's mind, that while Gray was studiously acquiring, as he did, the richest stores of knowledge during his residence abroad, and adding to his great and various accomplishments in literature and art; Walpole was wasting either in indolence* or dissipation, or frivolous amusements, the invaluable opportunities of improvement which he then

* Of much affectation of manner and language, even from his early years, Walpole cannot be acquitted. Many interesting anecdotes on this point are to be seen in the "Harcourt Correspondence," and are sometimes placed in so strong a light, that we should be inclined to adopt the words of a writer who was not himself supposed to be free from it: "Monsieur, vous dit qu'il est trop *poli* pour être *naturel*."—See "Les Sermons Indiscrets de Marivaux."

possessed: a more careful consideration of his Correspondence with his friends, will present us with a much fairer view, and it may be justly concluded, that the following testimonial, given by no common or undiscerning hand, will entirely remove so unfavourable an impression. Conyers Middleton, whose biographical work is still, perhaps, without a rival for the taste and elegance with which it is composed, and whose literature was of no ordinary rank, even among scholars,* had resided at Rome, where he had collected and described a considerable number of antiquities, chiefly in bronzes, valuable both for the beauty of the art displayed in them, and the light which they threw on various doubtful passages relating to the customs or mythology of the Roman people. This collection Middleton subsequently sold to Horace Walpole, and in the Preface to his description of it, he mentions him in terms of no common praise, such indeed as only could be deserved by a person of superior attainments, and of elegant and rational pursuits.

"Ex his autem agri Romani divitiis, neminem profecto de peregrinatoribus nostris, thesaurum inde deportasse credo, et rerum delectu et pretio magis æstimabilem, ac quem *amicus meus nobilis* Horatius

* Dr. S. Parr, in his Preface to "Bellendenus," bestows a high eulogy on the acquirements and talents of Middleton. "Litteræ fuerunt Middletono non hæ vulgares et quotidianæ, sed uberrimæ et maxime exquisitæ. Stylus ejus ita purus ac suavis ita salebris sine ullis profluens, quiddam et canorum habet numeros ut videatur complecti quales in alio quopiam præter Addisonum, frustra quæsiveris," &c.

Walpole in Angliam nuper advexit. Juvenis, non tam generis nobilitate, ac paterni hominis gloriâ, quam ingenii, doctrinâ, et virtute propriâ illustris. Ille vero haud citius fere in patriam reversus est, quam de studiis meis, ut consuerat, familiariter per literas quærens, mihi ultro de copia sua, quicquid ad argumenti mei rationem, aut libelli ornamentum pertineret, pro arbitrio meo utendum obtulit.

"Quam quidem ejus liberalitatem libenter admodum amplexus essem, ni operis hujus jam prope absoluti, fastidio quodam correptus, atque ad alia festinans, intra terminos ei ab initio destinatos illud continere statuissem. Attamen præclaram istam Musei Walpoliani suppellectilem, ab interprete aliquo peritiore propediem explicandam, edendamque esse confido."*

The reader of these Letters will be interested in seeing the entire secret history of the "Heroic Epistle" unveiled for the first time before them, and the many cautious artifices with which it was attempted to conceal the author. It was not from the remote and tranquil solitudes of a Yorkshire rectory that a satire, which showed an intimate acquaintance with all the news and scandal of the town, and which could fix its mark on each prevailing weakness from the City to the Court, might be expected to come forth; but the public eye was very soon suspiciously directed to Mason,† after a few vague inquiries about others; and anxious for the

* See V. C. Middletoni, Pref. ad Germana quædam Antiq. Monumenta, &c., p. 6.

† In the "St. James's Chronicle," of Tuesday, Feb. 20, 1798,

safety of his reputation, and for his professional character, he deemed it necessary to direct a strong letter of disapprobation to a brother poet, who had too unguardedly expressed his conviction of the author's name. Warton, many years before, had been called on to repel a somewhat ambitious attack from the same arm, which now displayed a more perfect command of its weapons, and with the discriminating delicacy of a poet's taste, he believed that he had discovered evidence in the work itself of the only person by whom it could have been formed: —"I have been told," Mason writes, "that you have pronounced me very frequently in company to be the author of the 'Heroic Epistle to Sir William Chambers;' and I am told that the Premier himself suspects that I am so upon your authority. Surely, Sir, mere internal evidence (and you can possibly have no other) can never be sufficient to ground such a determination upon, when you consider how many papers in this rhyming age of ours, are possessed of that knack of Pope's versification, which constitutes one part of the merit of that poem; and as to the wit, humour, and satire which it contains, no part of my writings can ever lead you, by their analogy, to form so peremptory a judgment. I acquit you, however, in this procedure of envy, even of the

the following paragraph appeared. "Mr. Mason, it is now known, was the author of the "Heroic Epistle," as we have always suspected. He, in great measure, betrayed himself once at Sir Joshua Reynolds' by saying to his next neighbour, 'Don't you think it very odd Sir Joshua should invite me to meet Sir William Chambers?' Sir W. Chambers sat opposite to him."

slightest degree of ill-nature; and believe that what you said, was only to show your critical acumen. I only mention it, that you may be more cautious of speaking of other persons in like manner, who may throw such anonymous bantlings of their brain into the wide world. To some of these, it might prove an essential injury; for though they might deserve the frown of power (as the author in question certainly does), yet I am persuaded that your good nature would be hurt, if that frown was either increased, or fixed by your dixit."

Notwithstanding this disclaim, and the other stratagems used to mislead, which are described in this Correspondence, the belief gradually grew and strengthened, and then pointed sagaciously to what appears the truth, that Walpole furnished the notes and illustrations of the text, and conducted the poem through the press. The satires that followed, of far inferior merit, were brought into the world in the same manner; and several epigrams which I possess, and short little pieces of the day, were sent up from time to time to Walpole, and published by him in the "Public Advertiser," or other papers. One long poem, however, still remains in manuscript, entitled, "The Duchess and the Squire: a Political Eclogue on the Subject of Reform in Parliament;" but I do not think that it would be of advantage to the poet, or to the public, to remove it from the slumber of the closet which it has so long enjoyed.

It will be observed that the present Correspondence is broken off in the year 1784, and does not recommence till

just before the close of Walpole's life in 1796. The cause of the rupture of this long and apparently sincere friendship chiefly arose in political differences of opinion. Both Mason and Walpole were Whigs: both possessed strong attachments to party, as well as political feelings; they considered the support of the Whigs, and the cause of freedom to be consistently united. "We must thank the Whigs," Walpole said, "for all the prosperity of our country. Had the Tories succeeded at the Revolution or succession, this country would have been another Spain—the desolate abode of nobles and priests." Mason's opinions were congenial, and appeared prominently, and in the very front of the Yorkshire Petition in 1782. Before the French Revolution, Mr. Pinkerton informs us,* Walpole was so warm a friend of freedom, that he was almost a republican; but he then became afraid lest the republican principles he admired might not be too perfect for human nature; while the experience of advancing years insensibly diminished his confidence in the favourite opinions he had so long maintained. Mason's principles shall be related in the authentic language of his friend, Dr. Burgh,† who was thoroughly acquainted with them.

* See "The Walpoliana;" but this book, like others by the same editor, is not always to be relied upon, and must be read with extreme caution. A coarser hand than Walpole's is often to be discerned.

† Dr. Burgh edited "The English Garden," with notes, and was preparing an Edition of Mason's Works, but died before he

"As long," he says, "as the political distinctions of this country consisted of Whig and Tory, Mr. Mason was a Whig in the genuine sense of the word, the degrees of Monarchy were the points in dispute, and he ever contended for its limitation, as settled at the glorious Revolution of 1688. He wished to see the principles of the People preserved, and accordingly comprised in his Whiggism, a dislike of that party monopoly with which a few great men engrossed the two first Princes of the Hanover Line, and as keepers of the royal person, held out in a manner their own names as the subject of attachment. To the invasion of the prerogative, and to the more increasing covert influence of the Crown, he was a constitutional adversary; but he was equally hostile to its illegal contraction by the encroachments of an unprincipled oligarchy: in 1783 he accordingly stood conspicuously forward in opposition to both, and so long as the question related only to the balance of our three estates, he uniformly exerted himself to preserve its adjustment; but when the existence of Whig and Tory, and their proper objects, vanished before the tempestuous principles of France, and new distinctions took their place, when the question lay between our tempered Monarchy, and pure Democracy, it cannot surely be said that the principles of a genuine Whig are deserted by resisting the latter. He trembled, then, for the effects of popular move-

completed it. The edition in four volumes was published by the Rev. Mr. Dixon, of Boughton, Northamptonshire.

ments, and foresaw the danger of either the success or failure of their efforts: the former resulting in obvious and immediate anarchy, the latter in restraints incompatible with freedom, and yet likely to obtain acquiescence and establishment from the necessity of imposing them, and preventing renewed attempts. He never considered anarchy as emancipation, nor a dissolution of society as that liberty which is desirable by men who had once been *toll'd* to church; and even prognosticated an easier return to ancient freedom from the preservation of ancient forms, than from the sway of those boisterous demagogues, who would reduce the people to the necessity of wearing strait-waistcoats and chains. He wished, accordingly, for the suspension of all such questions as led to jealousy in the present tumultuous moment, and pressed an adjournment of Parliamentary Reformation to any immediate attempt for its establishment, which he conceived would not only fail now, but might perhaps incur a popular condemnation of the measure, that would for ever sink it: he even grew to dread the effort at repair, which was likely to break down the pillars of the constitution!" But amidst this apparent agreement in the change of their mutual opinions, former confidence seems to have been deeply impaired, and jealousies and suspicions, not altogether explained in the following narrative, arose.

"I shall tell you," says Walpole, "a great secret: the cause of my difference with Mason, 1785. Lord

H(arcourt), Mason and I used often to meet together, as we cordially agreed in our sentiments of the public measures pursued during this reign. But when the India Bill of Fox came to be agitated, Mason took a decided part against it, nay, wrote to me, that upon this occasion every one ought to assist the King, and warmly recommended it to me to use my influence in that cause. You may imagine I was a little surprised at this new style of my old friend, and the impertinence of giving his advice unasked. I returned a light ironical answer. As Mason had, in a Sermon preached before the Archbishop of York, publicly declared that he would not accept of a bishopric, if offered to him, I jeeringly told him that, I supposed his antipathy to a bishopric had subsided. He being also the first promoter of the York Association, (which I never approved), I added that I supposed he intended to use that fool W(yvil) as a tool of popularity. For W(yvil) is so stupid that he cannot even write English, and the first York Association Paper, which is written by W(yvil), is neither sense nor grammar. The consequence of these differences has been, that we call on each other, but are on the coldest terms. Mason too has turned a kind of courtier, though he was formerly courted; he being one of the King's chaplains, and it being his turn to preach before the royal family, the Queen ordered another to perform the office. But when this substitute began to read prayers, Mason also began the same service.

He did not say whether he proceeded, but this I had from his own mouth. Mason consequently resigned the chaplainship. * * * * I do think that Mason changed his sentiments for the sake of seeing his favourite scheme of Parliamentary Reform prosper in Mr. Pitt's hands. I nevertheless must regard the change as flat apostacy, for Pitt was then acting in formal opposition to the constitution of his country, being the only minister, who ever withstood the House of Commons, &c."

Walpole's enmity to Doctor Johnson seems to have grown out of the difference of their political opinions, and their literary tastes. They were as opposite in most points of character as two persons could well be; and if Walpole disapproved the learned and elaborate diction of the author of the "Rambler," or if he disallowed the rules by which his critical decisions and his opinions of the merits of the writers who came before him for judgment were formed, it must be allowed that such differences in matters of taste might reasonably exist, without their being attributed to an undue severity of censure, or, which is worse, to a capricious and personal dislike of the writer. "I have read, and, indeed, printed, some objections which Cowper made in his copy of Johnson's "Life of Milton," as severe as any of those which came from Walpole's pen; and Sir Egerton Brydges informs us,* "that he remembers

* In his "Life of Milton," page 235.

how Dr. Johnson shocked the taste and the creed of the higher and more imaginative classes of his poetical readers, when his 'Lives' came out; but he was the fashion of the day. The sensitive were stunned by his coarseness, and the wordlings and the talkers became insolent in their triumph. Johnson's work did great injury to the national taste." Nor was this judgment the effect of any splenetic feeling on the part of the writer, and certainly is not to be attributed to any incapacity to estimate the various and great merits of the work, which he appears in this place to disparage; for Sir Egerton Brydges had often mentioned to me his wish to give a new edition of these 'Lives,' with such notes as would supply any additional information that was important, or correct any injudicious comments and erroneous decisions.

Certainly, in this celebrated work, there is ample room both for admiration and for censure; and it is no easy task to estimate correctly the comparative merits of different schools of poetry, or of particular writers; but if the critic permits the passions and prejudices of the will to break in upon the deliberate steadiness and rectitude of the judgment, he cannot be surprised if his decisions are but partially received, or perhaps altogether rejected; and we may not be disinclined to agree with one who, when speaking of the work before us, has the merit of having brought to his own inquiries the calm and candid frame of mind which is alone fitted for the discovery of truth, and which with him was accompanied with the most indulgent spirit of criticism. "To myself," he

says, "much as I admire his (Johnson's) great and various merits, both as a critic and writer, human nature never appeared in a more humiliating form than when I read his 'Lives of the Poets,' a performance which exhibits a more faithful, expressive, and curious picture of the author, than all the portraits attempted by his biographers, and which in this point of view compensates fully, by the moral lessons it may suggest, for the critical errors which it sanctions. The errors, alas! are not such as any one, who has perused his imitations of Juvenal, can place to the account of a bad taste, but such as had their root in weaknesses which a noble mind would be still more unwilling to acknowledge."*

There is one other point, which I would mention without dwelling at any length upon it, regarding a very ingenious hypothesis that appeared in the sixth volume of "Walpole's Miscellaneous Correspondence," in the form of a letter to the editor, by Sir Charles Grey, in which Walpole is presumed to be the author of the Letters of Junius. I am quite ignorant of the effect which this supposition has produced upon the public mind; and it is not my wish to allude to it, without at the same time expressing my great respect and regard for the writer; but I will briefly bring before him some reasons, independent of the internal evidence, which do not permit me to agree in the conclusions which he has drawn. He has mentioned as one re-

* See Dugald Stewart's Philosophical Essays, 4to. p. 491.

markable circumstance, that in the Letters of Walpole to his various correspondents, seldom omitting, beyond news of any other kind, all the circumstances that arose, day by day, in the circles of political life, and everything in character, action or writing that related to them, that he is uniformly silent on the subject of Junius. Could he therefore be himself the author, jealously guarding his own secret? That there was something worthy of attention in this remark, and something singular in his uniformly, and therefore, it would appear, designedly, passing over the most remarkable production of the time, while very inferior ones were duly and diligently registered, cannot be doubted: but if this difficulty was felt at the time, it has, in a great degree, been removed by the numerous Works of Walpole* which have subsequently been published in which the name of this celebrated writer often appears, and where he is mentioned, as in his celebrated attack on the Duke of Bedford, in such terms as are utterly inconsistent with the supposition that the censurer and the writer are the same person. My second argument would be drawn from the Correspondence now before us; it is clear that Mason and Walpole were united in their party feelings and political opinions; that they joined their forces in poetry and prose, in numerous attacks

* I have mentioned the passages in Walpole's Works in a note in which I recollect Junius to have been mentioned, but probably others may have escaped me.

on the public characters of the day, and that they appear quite unreserved in their communications on all such subjects; that their correspondence was going on during the time Junius was in *full blow*, and yet that there is not the most faint allusion, that suspicion could rest upon, to the subject. It is quite clear to me that if Walpole wrote Junius, Mason must have known the secret.

To these remarks, which may not, I think, be quite without their due weight, I have now to add that I possess Walpole's own copy of Junius, with his MS. annotations in the margin; and that in some places he asserts the *falsehood*, using that plain and forcible language, of the statements or accusations there made: and I have also read a paper, still in manuscript, written by Walpole, in which he expresses his object to be the discovery of that celebrated writer; while in this paper, he plainly shows that he possesses no superior knowledge regarding the subject, and points his suspicions, supported by evidence which I thought, when I read it, very general and inconclusive, on a person whose name had never before or since been introduced into the controversy, and indeed which I believe to be quite unknown to the world, either of politics or letters.*

* This Paper was only casually found by me among other loose fragments of unfinished memoranda, and was neither written nor placed so as to show any artful and designing purpose to *mislead*.

I think there is a growing conviction, arising from an acknowledged variety of style, that the Letters of Junius were not the production of a single person; but as my purpose is only to mention them, as connected with the name of Walpole, I gladly withdraw from the mention of a subject which I am quite unequal to discuss, and which, from information I have just received, is supposed at last to be on the verge of discovery.

It was my wish, had time been allowed me, to turn from the heat and dust of these controversies, in which our two correspondents have been so long engaged, and to have represented one of them, at least, as he would best have appeared, in another and higher character, of the benevolent pastor of his affectionate flock, the faithful guardian of their temporal interests, and the teacher commissioned to supply their spiritual wants. In this character Mason would have more advantageously appeared than we have yet seen him. The church, which he improved and adorned, still attests the pious munificence which alike increased its utility and beauty: the children of the present generation are the successors, of those, for whose temporal and spiritual advantages he made that careful provision, which now passing into the hands of his successors, has become a permanent blessing; for he thought that within the walls of the humble village school must the early virtues be formed and take root, which are hereafter to preserve their bloom and fragrance amid scenes and climates the most ungenial and unfavorable

to them. Nor would the dwelling of the author of the "English Garden" be seen without respect and pleasure by all whose approbation is of value, from the discriminate taste with which it would be given. To those who may not have had the privilege which we have enjoyed, of being admitted within those kind and hospitable walls, it may be interesting to know that the house which Mason built still remains unaltered, or only in the alterations which time requires, improved*:—that his library still remains on the same shelves; his pictures still look down from the same spots where his hand had placed them; his closets still retain the curious and ample stores of literature that he deposited in them, and which have been ever since guarded with the most affectionate respect and attention to his wishes: and if the footsteps of the poet have long deserted the groves and gardens which he loved, the guiding Hand that formed them may still be traced, as it commanded its new and improved creations to arise. Among those trees which he planted, and which now, matured by time, spread their ampler shadows on the lawn, that same taste will be recognised, however confined the spot, in every

* "Hanc vides villam ut nunc quidem est, lautius ædificatam *pastoris* nostri studio, qui cum esset infirmâ valetudine, hic ferè ætatem egit!" These words of the Roman orator, with the alteration of one, may be applied to Mason's rectory at Aston, which he built at a considerable expense, adorned with taste, and which in his later days he seldom left.

winding walk, in each connected shade, and in every opening view, which hereafter expanding over a wider field, was to give, even to Nature herself, a more pleasing and attractive dress; to refine and multiply the tastes of a whole people, and to call forth an art which could alike bestow its minuter beauties on the peasant's cottage, or spread its rich mantle of decoration over the most extended domain: and while we acknowledge with gratitude the genius of more than one who successfully cultivated this art, either in precept or in practice; while we feel its beauties in the happy creations of Browne, or in the eloquent pages of Gilpin and Price; on Mason, above all others, we must bestow the superior praise, of introducing the sister-arts to us hand-in-hand, and of permitting us to see the inventive genius of one appear with double lustre when reflected in the clear and bright mirror of the other's language, and adorned with the appropriate beauties of chaste and elegant poetry.

I have now only to add, that Mason's monument, in marble, is to be seen on the walls of the chancel of Aston church; his living monument is in the hearts of some who, though many years have passed away, still remember, with affectionate regret, the poet, the pastor, and the friend.

J. M.

BENHALL, MAY 1, 1851.

CORRESPONDENCE

OF

THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE

AND

THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

SIR, Arlington Street, Dec. 29, 1763.

Your bookseller has brought me the volume of your works, for which I give you a thousand thanks, I have read them again in this form with great satisfaction. I wish in return that I had any thing literary to tell you or send you, that would please you, half as much. I should be glad to know how to convey to you another volume of my Anecdotes and a volume of Engravings; which will be published in a fortnight or three weeks — but they will be far from amusing you. If the other volumes were trifling, these, are ten times more so, nothing but my justice to the public, to whom I owed them, could have prevailed over my dissatisfaction with them, and have made me produce them. The painters in the third volume are more obscure, most of them, than those in the former; and the facts relating to them have not even the

patina of ambiguity to hide and consecrate their insignificance. The tome of Engravers is a mere list of very bad prints. You will find this account strictly true and no affectation. To make you some amends, it will not be long before I have the pleasure of sending you by far the most curious and entertaining book that my press has produced, if it diverts you as much as it does Mr. Gray and me, you will think it the most delightful book you ever read and yet out of 150 pages you had better skip the fifty first. Are not you impatient to know what this curiosity is and to see it? it is the life of the famous Lord Herbert of Cherbury and written by himself — of the contents I will not anticipate one word. I address this letter to Aston upon the authority of your book. I should be sorry if it miscarried only as it is a mark of my gratitude.

I am, Sir,
your much obliged
humble servant
HOR. WALPOLE.

P.S. Have you read Mrs. Macauley? I am glad again to have Mr. Gray's opinion to corroborate mine that it is the most sensible, unaffected and best history of England that we have had yet.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

SIR, Aston, Jan. 6, 1764.

The bad weather which has confined me a fortnight

longer in this place than I intended has given me an opportunity of receiving your most obliging letter in due time. I cannot help however animadverting on your reason for directing it to Aston which you say was on the authority of my Book, that is to say "because I had written a sonnet here the 12th of last May, you concluded I should be here also in the very depth of one of the worst winters in the memory of Man." A conclusion this, which would only become a Bishop to make and he too ought to be one's diocesan. I know nobody else that should expect a poor rector, to keep such strict parochial residence. The fact however is on your side, but I must own I am here much against my will and shall therefore move southward whenever, I can muster up courage sufficient—to wade seven mile to a turnpike.

I am very highly obliged to you for your intention of sending me the concluding volumes of your Anecdotes on Painting, but hope to be in town soon enough to receive them there. Should they prove to be merely what you say they are I shall read them with great pleasure, for though I am no antiquarian I have as gross an appetite as any of them, in matters where painting is concerned. Lord Herbert's Life will be a feast indeed.

I should as soon have thought of purchasing Aulay Macaulay's short hand, as Mrs. Macaulay's History on seeing them both advertised. I shall now however lead the lady into my library very speedily, where she will find no competition for I never met with a

History of England yet that I thought worth buying, nor indeed could I ever read one fairly through, except David Hume's. I wish you had told me whether she was a maid, wife or widow, not that I have any intentions of making my addresses to her; but that I might have known whether she be born of English parents, a fact which I am national enough to be very anxious about. I shall learn this I hope when I see Mr. Gray at Cambridge, where I mean to stay a week or two before I come to town.

Believe me to be with very great esteem
your most obliged and faithful
humble servant,
W. MASON.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

SIR, Aston, April 14, 1765.

Though I neglected returning you my thanks for the present you made me of Lord Herbert's Life, and of which, as you favoured me with a view of the proof sheets, I before gave you my sentiments. Yet I will not omit thanking you for a more extraordinary thing in its kind, which though it comes not from your press, yet I have episcopal evidence is written by your hand. And indeed less than such evidence would scarce have contented me, for when a friend of mine to whom I had recommended the Castle of Otranto returned it me with some doubts of its originality; I laught him to scorn, "and wondered he could be so absurd as to think that any body now a days had ima-

gination enough to invent such a story." He replied that his suspicion arose merely from some parts of familiar dialogue in it, which he thought of too modern a cast. Still sure of my point, I affirmed this objection, if there was any thing in it, was merely owing to its not being translated a century ago. All this I make it a point of conscience to tell you, for though it proves me your dupe, I should be glad to be so duped again every year of my life.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
your much obliged and obedient servant
W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

SIR, Arlington Street, April, 17, 1765.

The unexpected and obliging favour of your letter I own gave me great satisfaction; I published the Castle of Otranto with the utmost diffidence and doubt of its success. Yet though it has been received much more favourably than I could flatter myself it would be, I must say your approbation is of another sort than general opinion. The first run for or against a new work is what I am sorry to say ought not much to flatter or discourage an author. Accordingly, self-love hitherto had not blinded me: I will not answer now but it may get a little hold on me, your praise is so likely to make me vain, that I oblige myself to recollect all the circumstances that can abate it, such as,

the fear I had of producing it at all (for it is not every body that may in this country play the fool with impunity). The hurry in which it was composed, and its being begun without any plan at all; for though in the short course of its progress, I did conceive some views, it was so far from being sketched out with any design at all, that it was actually commenced one evening, from the very imperfect recollection of a dream with which I had waked in the morning. It was begun and finished in less than two months, and then I showed it to Mr. Gray, who encouraged me to print it, this is the true history of it; and I cannot but be happy, Sir, that he and you have been pleased with it, yet it is as true, if you will give me leave to say so, that I think your friend judged rightly in pronouncing part of the dialogue too modern. I had the same idea of it, and I could, but such a trifle does not deserve it, point out other defects, besides some to which most probably I am not insensible. You must forgive me, if your commendation has already drawn me in to talk too much of a thing of my own; but I am vain of its pleasing *you* Sir, and what would have fully comforted me if I had miscarried with most readers, is not likely to make me think worse of their judgment when confirmed by your taste.

I am, Sir.
your most obedient
and obliged humble servant
HOR. WALPOLE.

P. S. It is not my interest to recommend it but in justice to what I owe to your amusement I must advise you to read the lettres du Marquis de Roselle, if you have not yet seen them. They are written by the wife of Monsr. Beaumont who has got so much credit by defending the family of Calas. I do not recommend the boasted Siege of Calais to you, though it contains some good lines, but the conduct is wofull.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

DEAR SIR, Arlington Street, April, 5, 1769.

I have read carefully and with great pleasure your two comedies, and will tell you sincerely my opinion of them. The grave one pleases me the most, and made me shed tears. I think it wants very little improvement: none in the conduct, if any rather more comic, which you have confined too much to Flora and the footman, one point I think wants correction, which is Lucinda's neglect of enquiring after her father till the moment she is ready to depart. The greatest objection I believe could be made, is, that the story, at least the situations, have too much resemblance to the Conscious Lovers. When I have spoken so frankly, I trust you will believe me too, when I assure you I think it an excellent comedy, and can see no reason you could have to letting it be acted, concealing the author, which I could not advise, after what I have said on that subject. So far from agreeing with Mr. Gray, I like the bastardy, and would have the governor, consistently with the good sense of his character, say

more against the cruel prejudice that falls on the Innocent instead of the guilty. I will not flatter you more about the other piece, the indelicacy of Lady Fitzharold's character I think too strong; and do not approve Lady Betty's being so easily drawn, contrary to the pride of her ideas, which you make her characterstic, into love for the supposed Valet de Chambre. His part pleases me extremely, is new and would have great effect upon the stage; there are many scenes very well worked up; but the play would want softening in the respects I have mentioned. Still I own the other is my favourite: it requires very little alteration, might easily be improved, and I am sure would please universally. If you concealed your name, I can conceive no objection to your letting it be acted, which I should very much wish to see. — I give you a thousand thanks for trusting them to me, and for the sight of the drawing, which lost nothing by my being prepared for it, besides the humour which is admirable, it is excellent as a drawing. I enclose a short advertisement for Mr. Hoyland's poems, I mean by it to tempt people to a little more charity, and to soften to him, as much I can, the humiliation of its being asked for him; if you approve it, it shall be prefixed to the edition.

Forgive the freedoms I have taken with you, Sir, I should not, but from esteem, and from believing you above being offended with them. I shall see you, I flatter myself, before you go out of town.

Your most obedient

HOR. WALPOLE.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

DEAR SIR, Arlington Street, May 11, 1769.

I am more pleased than surprised at your kindness, and the hurry with which I answer your letter will I hope in some measure express my gratitude. I thank you for myself, not for my play. I care little about the latter, in comparison of the satisfaction I receive from your friendship. I cannot think the play deserved the pains you have bestowed on it, but I am very willing to flatter myself that you felt some kindness for the author: and I doubt I am one of those selfish parents that love themselves better than their offspring.

I cannot think of the stage — I believe from pride — and I am weary of printing and publishing — I suppose from vanity, at least I am sure I have no better reasons for not making all possible use of your alterations, with which I am so much pleased that I shall correct my own copy by them. I am astonished to see with how few lines you have been able totally to change the canvas of a whole play, a play totally defective in the plan, and I believe not much better in the conduct, which you would not exert your judgment, or rather your chymistry to prove; for I must repeat how surprised I am at the *solution* you have made with so little trouble, I own too my own want of judgment: I believe I was so pleased with what ought to have prevented my attempting the subject, which was the singularity of it. Unfrequent crimes are as little the business of tragedy, as singular characters are of

comedy; it is inviting the town to correct a single person. You see Sir, I am far from being incorrigible, on the contrary, I am willing to be corrected; but as Mr. Gray could tell you, I cannot correct myself. I write I neither know how nor why, and always make worse what I try to amend. I have begged him a thousand times to no purpose to correct trifles I have written, and which I really could not improve myself. I am not so unreasonable or so imprudent as to ask the same favour of you, Sir; but I accept with great thankfulness what you have voluntarily been so good as to do for me; and should the Mysterious Mother ever be performed when I am dead, it will owe to you its presentation.

When I see Mr. Stonhewer, I will know if he would chuse another edition of poor Mr. Hoyland's Poems. I doubt *not,* as when he sent for the last twenty, he said he believed he *could* get off them. I gladly adopt your corrections, but I cannot father your own goodness. It is to you, Sir, Mr. Hoyland owes every thing.

Dodsley has published a dozen letters of Pope to Mrs. Blount, they are evidently real love-letters — and yet they are stiff and unnatural, though he affects negligence in them.

I forgot to reprove you for calling me *a Poet.* I wish I had any pretensions to that title. It is true I early wished to be one, but soon found I was not; my prose was like speeches of the Members of the House of Commons, who try to talk themselves into titles to which they were not born; you Sir, who found your

patent in your cradle, call me *My Lord*, as English Peers condescend to give their own appellation to the peers of Ireland, though conscious that the latter are only Commoners: for my part I give up all pretensions but to your esteem, with which you have flattered me, and which I beg you to continue by marks of friendship to,

dear Sir,
your much obliged
humble servant
HOR. WALPOLE.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, York, August 28, 1771.

I deferred writing to you on the late melancholy occasion till I heard you was upon your return from Paris. I hope this will find you in perfect health after your journey, and I have sent it under Mr. Stonhewer's cover that he may deliver it to you when he hears you are arrived in town.

You will be informed I presume before this that I am entrusted with all Mr. Gray's Papers "to preserve or destroy at my own discretion" an important charge which I shall find myself unable to execute without the advice and assistance of his other friends and therefore I do not doubt that if, amongst these, I apply to you you will think it no trouble to give me your opinion and counsel. Hitherto I have been able to do little more than to sort in parcels the letters of his living friends,

that I may return them, or burn them as the parties shall direct me to do. I do not find many of yours but those which I have found I have taken due care of; and shall wait your directions concerning them.

I do not believe that Mr. Gray has left one finished Poem; but there are some considerable and beautiful fragments amongst which his Essay on Education is the principal, but at present, I cannot speak with any certainty, as I have only examined his papers very transiently, when I am better informed, I shall do myself the honour of writing to you more fully; in the mean time I thought it my duty to acquaint you with the above particulars, and to assure you that I am with the truest respect,

dear Sir,

your most obliged and faithful servant

W. MASON.

I have in my possession your printed letter to Dr. Milles.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

DEAR SIR, Strawberry Hill, Sept. 9, 1771.

I judge of your shock and concern at Mr. Gray's by my own. I saw him the day before I left England; he complained of the gout flying about him, and said he had been a month at Kensington for the air. I saw him changed and very low — yet I had not the least

idea of any sudden misfortune. Three weeks after I read in the Chronicle at Paris, that He was dead! I would not believe it — not alas! from reason; but I could not bear to believe it — I wrote to Mr. Cole to inquire — He has confirmed it, and I find it at my return but too true. I feel for you, Sir, and as I most heartily regret him, I would do any thing to show my regard to his memory. If he has left any thing for the press, I flatter myself mine will be allowed to contribute to that office. I shall be very happy to bear all the expense — you, I am sure, Sir, will let his genius want no due honour — and it is not to interfere with any thing that you design to say of him, and which you will say better than any body; that I send you the following lines, they are not worthy of him, nor do I repeat them to you but as a proof of my sorrow, and a tribute to your friend, which is the only light in which they can please you, you will see that the lines suppose him buried among his real predecessors.

Great shades of Shakspear, Milton, Dryden, hear;
A genuine Bard from Genius claims a tear.
He, who in numbers, worthy of the Lyre,
Enshrin'd your names, now joins the mighty choir.
Amidst your radiant Urns his Urn inclose,
A spot more hallow'd than where Kings repose,
Aloft let Pomp her Edwards, Henrys, keep;
Near Homer's dust should Pindar's ashes sleep.

If I could have greater contempt for the age than I have, it would be on observing that one single para-

graph is all that has been said on our friend; but when there are columns in every paper on Sir Francis Delaval, ought we not to be glad? who would be the hero of these times?

Is there any chance, Sir, of your coming southwards? I long to pass a melancholy hour with you. Who has possession of the plate from my picture of Mr. Gray? I have many scraps and letters of his that show how very early his genius was ripe, and which will please you exceedingly. To collect the reliques of our friends is perhaps the sweetest employment of those moments that remain when we have lost them! It is a decent preparation too for our own fate.

I am, dear Sir,
your most obedient
humble servant
HOR. WALPOLE.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, York, Sept. 21, 1771.

Your favour of the 9th, by being directed—only to Aston and not near Sheffield strayed I believe through all our three Ridings before it found me here. I had enclosed a Letter to Mr. Stonhewer to deliver to you when you returned to England which I hope you also have received ere this: and therefore will not think me deficient in point of respect to you on the melancholy occasion, which led me to begin the correspondence. The lines which you have done me the honour

to send me are excellently well turned and justly expressive of his poetical abilities, and I think with a little alteration might be inscribed on a monument in the Poets corner Westminster Abbey, the alteration I mean is bust, for urn; in consequence of which the three latter lines would require a small change which might easily be made without altering the turn of thought. I know you will make me the same answer to this which you did when I talked of a certain alteration before in a greater work, yet I know you will excuse me for giving you my free sentiments — even when I add that the epitaph will still want something more, as it yet does not praise him for what I think he deserves more to be praised than for his poetical talents,—I mean the qualities of his heart.

After thanking you for the very obliging offer you make of publishing his poems, &c. I will with the same freedom tell you my opinion upon that subject. I always thought Mr. Gray blameable for letting the booksellers have his MSS. gratis.—I never saw any thing myself beneath the dignity of a gentleman in making a profit of the productions of ones own brain. I frequently had disputes with him on this matter which generally ended in a laugh, he called me covetous and I called him proud; what you think upon this head I know not, yet I trust you do not carry your ideas of this kind so far as Monsr. de Nivernois, because I remember what you said; when you gave me an anecdote about him and the French punctilio with regard to authorship.

Dodsley however has (I doubt not) got some hundred pounds by Mr. Gray's suffering him to print his poems as he has hitherto done, and in my opinion Dodsley nor any of the great booksellers ought to have been an object of his beneficence. I should not wonder at present if Dodsley claims a right in the copies of such things as he has already printed, yet I fancy he can shew no title to such a claim, or at least his title cannot preclude mine, and therefore, it is not to be doubted that if I prepared an edition of the poems in question—with ever so little new in it, such an edition would stop the sale of his, and continue to bring in a considerable profit, whether I kept the right or sold it to any other bookseller. My first business therefore will be to ascertain this right, and afterwards to make as much profit of the book as I possibly can. I hope you will do me the justice to believe that I shall dispose of the money that may accrue in a way that will do honour to the memory of Mr. Gray, and in so doing I flatter myself you will think that I shall do much better in this point than he did, who had certainly much better have taken the profits, and bestowed them on such benevolent purposes, for which his purse was never, till of late, sufficient to answer the demands of his heart, and which might have been in some sort assisted by this means had he not thrown it away on the most undeserving of all objects, printers and booksellers, and those rich ones into the bargain.

What I have said does not in the least counteract your thought of an edition from your own press—and

I shall be happy to consult you about it when we next meet. I only mean that the edition for public sale shall be contrived to be a lucrative one.

My ecclesiastical imprisonment in this dullest of all provincial towns continues till the 11th of Nov.; after a short stay at Aston I mean to go to Cambridge, to assist Mr. Brown in settling affairs there, and think of being in town about Xmas, when I shall make it my first business to pay my respects to you in Arlington Street.

Most faithfully yours

W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 25, 1771.

I have received both your letters, Sir, by Mr. Stonehewer and by the post from York. I direct this to Aston rather than to York, for fear of any miscarriage, and will remember to insert near *Sheffield.*

I not only agree with your sentiments, but am flattered that they countenance my own practice. In some cases I have sold my works, and sometimes have made the impressions at my own press pay themselves, as I am not rich enough to treat the public with all I print there; nor do I know why I should, some editions have been given to charities, to the poor of Twickenham, &c. Mr. Spence's life of Magliabecchi was bestowed on the reading taylor. I am neither ashamed of being an author, or a bookseller. My

mother's father was a timber-merchant, I have many reasons for thinking myself a worse man, and none for thinking myself better: consequently I shall never blush at doing any thing he did. I print much better than I write, and love my trade, and hope I am not one of those *most undeserving of all objects* printers and booksellers, whom I confess you lash with justice. In short, Sir, I have no notion of poor Mr. Gray's delicacy; I would not sell my talents as orators and senators do, but I would keep a shop, and sell any of my own works that would gain me a livelihood, whether books or shoes, rather than be tempted to sell myself. 'Tis an honest vocation to be a scavenger—but I would not be Solicitor General. Whatever method you fix upon for the publication of Mr. Gray's works, I dare answer I shall approve, and will, therefore, say no more on it till we meet. I will beg you, Sir, when you come to town to bring me what papers or letters he had preserved of mine—for the answer to Dr. Milles it is not worth asking you to accept or to take the trouble of bringing me, and, therefore, you may fling it aside where you please.

The epitaph is very unworthy of the subject. I had rather any body should correct my works than take the pains myself. I thank you very sincerely for criticizing it, but indeed I believe you would with much less trouble write a new one than mend that. I abandon it cheerfully to the fire, for surely bad verses on a great poet are the worst of panegyrics. The sensation of the moment dictated the epitaph, but though

I was concerned, I was not inspired; your corrections of my play I remember with the greatest gratitude, because I confess I liked it enough to wish it corrected, and for that friendly act, Sir, I am obliged to you. For writing, I am quitting all thoughts of it — and for several reasons — the best is because it is time to remember that I must quit the world. Mr. Gray was but a year older and he had much more the appearance of a man to whom several years were promised. A contemporary's death is the Ucalegon of all sermons: in the next place his death has taught me another truth. Authors are said to labour for posterity; for my part I find I did not write even for the rising generation. Experience tells me it was all for those of my own, or near my own, time. The friends I have lost were I find more than half the public to me. It is as difficult to write for young people, as to talk to them; I never, I perceive, meant any thing about them in what I have written, and cannot commence an acquaintance with them in print. Mr. Gray was far from an agreeable confident to self-love, yet I had always more satisfaction in communicating any thing to him, though sure to be mortified, than in being flattered by people whose judgment I do not respect. We had besides known each others ideas from almost infancy; and I was certain he would *understand* precisely what ever I said, whether it was well or ill expressed. This is a kind of feeling that every hour of age increases. Mr. Gray's death, I am persuaded, Sir, has already given you this sensation, and I

make no excuse for talking seemingly so much of myself, but though I am the instance of these reflections, they are only part of the conversation, which that sad event occasions, and which I trust we shall renew. I shall sincerely be a little consoled if our common regret draws us nearer together; you will find all possible esteem on my side; as there has been much similarity in some of our pursuits, it may make some amends for other defects. I have done with the business, the politics, the pleasures of the world; without turning hermit or morose. My object is to pass the remainder of my life tranquilly and agreeably, with all the amusements that will gild the evening, and are not subject to disappointment; with cheerfulness, for I have very good spirits, and with as much of the company, as I can obtain, of the few persons I value and like [value and like is one word]. If you have charity enough or inclination to contribute to such a system you will add much to the happiness of it, and if you have not, you will still allow me to say I shall be ever, with great regard, Sir,

your obedient humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, Curzon Street, The Eve of the Martyrdom, 1772.

I really see nothing to object to in your epilogue, but many things to approve, only in general I think it more in the style of a prologue, but perhaps the

author would not have liked one more comic and yet (comic being out of the case) it seems introductory to the Dutchesses character, and therefore rather of the prologue cast: Two lines occur to me which perhaps would mark who you mean by *a wit* more strongly, yet perhaps too comic'ly.—

> No says a wit, made up of French grimaces
> Yet, self-ordained, the high priest of the Graces.

This is really all that occurs to me on the perusal of it. Believe me, dear Sir,

most sincerely yours

W. MASON.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Curzon Street, Tuesday Morning, 1772.

Mr. Mason presents his respects to Mr. Walpole and desires his acceptance of the Etchings, which accompany this. He also desires, that in the course of the summer, he would let Mr. Stonhewer have the perusal of those extracts of Mr. Gray's out of the Cotton Library, &c. which Mr. Mason left at Strawberry hill, as Mr. Stonhewer had not time to review them before.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, May 9, 1772.

I have given up to Mr. Stonhewer, as you desired, dear Sir, Mr. Gray's volume of MSS, but shall be glad hereafter, if you do not dislike it, to print some of

the most curious. He himself was to lend me the speech and letters of Sir Thomas Wyat. At a leisure hour, would not it be amusing to you to draw up a little account of that Poet?

Dr. Brown has sent me a very civil letter of thanks for Gray's portrait; he speaks too of the book I intended for their college, and that he was to receive from you. I forget whether I troubled you with it or not.

I have selected for your use such of Gray's letters, as will be intelligible without many notes: but though all his early letters have both wit and humour, they are so local, or so confined to private persons and stories, that it would be difficult even by the help of a comment to make them interesting to the public; some of the incidents alluded to have slipped out of my own memory; still there are about twenty of his juvenile letters that I think will please. I will bring them with me when I make you a visit in August. I have a great many more to the very end of his life; but they are grave, and chiefly relative to questions in antiquity on which I consulted him, or begged him to consult the libraries at Cambridge; there are some criticisms on modern books and authors, either his own opinions or in answer to mine. These are certainly not proper for present publication: but I shall leave these and the rest behind me, and none of them will disgrace him; which ought to be our care, since it was so very much his own.

Mr. Palgrave is in town, and has promised to pass a day with me here, where I am continuing my immor-

tal labours with those durable materials, painted glass, and carved wood and stone. The foundations of the chapel in the garden are to be dug on Monday. The state-bedchamber advances rapidly, and will, I hope, be finished before my journey to Yorkshire. In short, this *old, old, very old castle*, as his prints called old Parr, is so near being perfect, that it will certainly be ready by the time I die, to be improved with Indian paper; or to have the windows cut down to the ground by some travelled lady.

The newspapers tell me that Mr. Chambers, the Architect, who has Sir-Williamized himself, by the desire as he says of the knights of the Polar Star his brethren, who were angry at his not assuming his proper title, is going to publish a treatise on ornamental gardening; that is, I suppose considering a garden as a subject to be built upon. In that light it will not interfere with your verses or my prose; and we may both use the happiest expression in the world and

coldly declare him free.

In truth our climate is so bad, that instead of filling our gardens with buildings, we ought rather to fill our buildings with gardens, as the only way of enjoying the latter;

The dreaded East is all the wind that blows;

And yet I am afraid to rail at it, lest the rain should make advantage of my plaints, and come and drown us till the end of July. I was lamenting the weather to M. de Guines; the French embassador. He said,

" in England you talk of nothing but the bad weather; I wonder you are not used to it." Yet one must have seen such a thing, as spring, or one could not have invented the idea. I can swear to have formerly heard nightingales as I have been sitting in this very bow-window. If I was thirty years younger, I might fancy they are gone because *Phoebe is gone;* but I have certainly heard them long since my ballad-making days. I hope *your garden,* which is not exposed to wayward seasons, but

will always flourish in immortal youth,

advances a great pace; consider, you are to record what it was, when fashion and great lords shall have brought back square inclosures, walls, terraces and labyrinths and shall be told by the le Nautre of the day, that *their lordships have invented a new taste;* and will never know to the contrary; for though beautiful poems preserve themselves, it is not by being read and known. Works of genius are like the Hermetic philosophers; none but adepts are acquainted with their existence, yet certainly nothing is ever lost — as you may find in Mr. Wharton's new life of Sir Thomas Pope, which has resuscitated more nothings, and more nobodies, than Birch's life of Tillotson or Louth's William of Wickham.

There has been a masquerade at the Pantheon, which was so glorious a vision that I thought I was in the old Pantheon, or in the Temples of Delphi or Ephesus, amidst a croud of various nations, and that formerly

Panthoides Euphorbus eram,

and did but recollect what I had seen. All the friezes and niches were edged with alternate lamps of green and purple glass, that shed a most heathen light, and the dome was illuminated by a heaven of oiled paper, well painted with gods and goddesses. Mr. Wyat, the Architect, has so much taste, that I think he must be descended from Sir Thomas. Even Henry VIII had so much taste, that, were he alive he would visit the Pantheon. Adieu! dear Sir,

yours most sincerely

HOR. WALPOLE.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, York, May 17, 1772.

Mr. Stonhewer only desired to look over the papers in question, he will undoubtedly return you them very soon, and then I hope you will print whatever you think proper; for I am perfectly conscious that you are the fittest person to make such a selection, and it was from the hope that you would do so, that I gave them to you. Yet I think those that you reject should be preserved, and I fancy you think so too.

I hear (for I have not seen the paper) that it has been printed as a piece of news, that I have resigned my chaplainship, and a cause assigned for it, which I fear will offend Lord Hertford. I could wish, therefore, if it came easily into conversation, that you would assure his Lordship, that my intention of resigning (for it is at present only intention) arises merely from my

resolution of not aiming at any further ecclesiastical preferment, but to sit down *uti conviva satur* in a parsonage, which I have built for that purpose. That as this parsonage is in Yorkshire, and my temporal concerns also in Yorkshire, a London journey at a stated time is often inconvenient, and will be (when I advance more in years) constantly disagreeable. On this account, and on this only, I mean to relinquish the chaplainship, and would wish to do it at any time when his Lordship thinks it most eligible, and I should imagine, that if you would please to intimate this to him, it would appear to him (as it is meant to be) a more civil way of proceeding, than by an abrupt letter of resignation. Remember you have, once at least, asked for a chaplainship, be assured if you ask for leave to resign one, you will find full as much gratitude from the person you do this latter favour for, as you did from the former. After all, if you do not like to concern yourself in state matters of such weighty moment, you have only to tell me so, and I will write a letter to my Lord Chamberlain in form and urge my own request. I could wish, however, that you would convince him that it is beneath me to be impertinent in a newspaper.

I mean to employ all the time that my frittered days will here allow in preparing Mr. Gray's papers and my account of them, for the press. As for gardens, &c. I leave them to the knight of the Polish star, and his modern Henry. When I return to Aston, and get into my own quiet garden, I perhaps there may plan ideal

ones, in the meanwhile I please myself with the thoughts that you will take your first glimpse of the beauties of the west riding from my study, before you advance to the centre of its beauties at Wentworth Castle. Be assured of the most cordial welcome, and believe me to be (with the truest sense of all your favours) dear Sir,

most faithfully yours

W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

DEAR SIR, Strawberry Hill, May 25, 1772.

I have told Lord Hertford of the injurious manner in which your thoughts of resigning the chaplainship have been represented in the newspapers, and of the obliging expressions you have used towards him in offering to give it up. He is extremely sensible of your civility, and desired I would thank you from him in the handsomest manner, and, as you permit him, will fill up your place, when you are willing to resign it. For myself, I assure you, dear Sir, that next to the pleasure I should have, if it was in my power to do you service, the greatest satisfaction I can enjoy, is to assist in delivering you from attendance on a court: a station below your sentiments and merit. I have read Chambers's book. It is more extravagant than the worst Chinese paper; and is written in wild revenge against Brown,

the only surprising consequence is, that it is laughed at, and it is not likely to be adopted, as I expected; for nothing is so tempting to fools, as advice to deprave taste.

Lord Carlisle has written and printed some copies of an ode on Gray's death. There is a real spirit of poetry in it, but no invention; for it is only a description of Gray's descriptions. There are also two epitaphs on Lady Carlisle's Dog, not bad, and a translation from Dante of the story of Count Ugolino, which I like the least of the four pieces. Mrs. Scott, sister of Mrs. Montague, has written a life of Agrippa d' Aubigné,—no—she has not written it she has extracted it from his own account, and no dentist at a fair could draw a tooth with less grace. It is only in a religious sense that she has made it a good book, for it seems she is very pious. There is a Mr. Jones too, who has published imitations of Asiatic poets: but as Chambers's book was advertised by the title of *ornamental* gardening, instead of *Oriental*, I think Mr. Jones's is a blunder of *Oriental* for ornamental, for it is very flowery, and not at all Eastern.

Somebody, I fancy Dr. Percy, has produced a dismal dull ballad, called "the Execution of Sr. Charles Bawdin," and given it for one of the Bristol Poems, called Rowley's—but it is a still worse counterfeit, than those that were first sent to me; it grows a hard case on our ancestors, who have every day bastards laid to them, five hundred or a thousand years after they are dead.

Indeed Mr. Macpherson, &c., are so fair as to beget the fathers as well as the children. Adieu! Dear Sir,

yours most sincerely

HOR. WALPOLE.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, July 6, 1772.

It is with great pleasure, dear Sir, I see the time approach of making you my visit. The first of August I shall begin my progress, or very near that day: but, as I do not travel on maccaronic-wings, it is uncertain how long I shall be before I reach Aston; but you shall know before, that I may not keep you waiting. You must be so good as to tell me my road, and if there is any thing in my way worth stopping to see — I mean literally to *see* — for I do not love *guessing* whether a bump in the ground is Danish, British, or Saxon. Give me leave to consult you too on the rest of my journey. From you I shall go to Lord Strafford, and thence wish to make excursions to York, Beverly, Castle-Howard, and Mr. Aislabie's. Will you draw me a map, and mark the distances? Consider I am lazy and not young; and do not weigh what can be done, but what I can do.

Mr. Stonhewer has not returned me the book, and unwilling to hurry him, I have forborn to send for it; if you write to him, will you mention it? I have printed King Edward's letters, and will bring you a copy. I

have since begun a kind of Desiderata curiosa, and intend to publish it in numbers, as I get materials; it is to be an Hospital of Foundlings; and though I shall not take in all that offer, there will be no inquiry into the nobility of the parents; nor shall I care how heterogeneous the brats are.

Mr. Cole tells me Dr. Brown has given him a print of Mr. Gray, and that it is very like, which rejoices me, and makes me more impatient for one.

I have a visitor just come in; you will lose nothing by it, for I do not know a syllable worth telling you,

and am,
dear Sir,
yours most sincerely
HOR. WALPOLE.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

DEAR SIR, Strawberry Hill, July 21, 1772.

I answer your letter, as you bid me, the moment I receive it, though I can scarce write for laughing at Alma Mater and her nurslings. I thank you a thousand times for so inestimable a present: I do not know where Lord R. could get another bell that would purchase it. It makes me very impatient to see the new poem that is cast in the same mint

You have chalked me out a noble route, but I have not courage to undertake so mighty a compass at once. I must besides be at Lord Strafford's earlier than such a tour would allow. I shall, therefore, set out on the third,

go directly to him, and wait on you afterwards, which will be soon after your return from York. A bad inn terrifies me more than any antiquity of art or nature can invite me, and I have no taste for crossing washes and rivers: one should look so silly to be drowned at my age, and to be asked by Charon, *qu'avois tu à faire dans cette galère!* I can pick up a few sights in a detached manner from Lord Strafford's, and the remainder I will consult with you at Aston.

Thank you for the account of the picture painted by Lambert. The print of Mr. Gray is the print of Mr. Mason, that is, either Mr. Cole named one for the other, or I misunderstood him; one of those you was so good as to give me is framed, and installed in the chamber where I am writing; it is the blue room where hang Mad. du Deffand, Grammont, and Hamilton, company that will tell you the value I set on your portrait.

I shall bring you a copy of King Edward's letters and I hope my edition of Grammont; if I can get Hamilton's print from the engraver, by that time too I shall have the first number of my miscellaneous antiquities ready. The first essay is only a republication of some tilts and tournaments. I have been at work on Sr. Thomas Wyat's life, to prefix to his speech and letters, but it is not yet finished, so if you know anything more about him than is in Gray's papers, and in Leland and our old biographers, I shall have ample room for it. Would it not be a pity to have so industrious a Caxton drowned? Mr. Cole has told me of somebody else, I forgot who it is that is going to republish old

historians à la Hearne. This taste of digging up antiquated relicks flourishes abundantly, unless Foote's last new piece blows us up. He has introduced the learned Society in Chancery lane, sitting as they really did, on Whittington and his cat; and as I do not love to be answerable for any fooleries, but my own, I think I shall scratch my name out of their books. Oxford has lately contributed to the mass the lives of Leland, Hearne, and Wood. In the latter's journal one of the most important entries is, *This day old Joan began to make my bed.* What a figure will this our Augustan age make; Garrick's prologues, epilogues and verses, Sir W. Chambers's gardening, Dr. Nowel's sermon, Whittington and his Cat, Sir John Dalrymple's history and the life of Henry II. What a library of poetry, taste, good sense, veracity and vivacity! ungrateful Shebbear! indolent Smollet! trifling Johnson! piddling Goldsmith! how little have they contributed to the glory of a period in which all arts, all sciences are encouraged and rewarded. Guthrie buried his mighty genius in a Review, and Mallet died of the first effusions of his loyalty. The retrospect makes one melancholy; but Ossian has appeared, and were Paradise once more lost, we should not want an Epic Poem. Adieu! dear Sir,

yours ever

H. W.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

August 24, 1772.

I should be very ungrateful, dear Sir, after all your goodness to me, particularly for your kind request in asking an account of my journey, if I did not immediately thank you for all your favours. My journey was as agreeable as it could be after leaving so pleasant a place and such good company, and was attended by no accident, except an escape from being drowned in a torrent of whores and apprentices at Barnet races. I passed through Clumber and Thoresby parks, and saw no one temptation to stop in either. Strawberry I found parched to the bone; it has rained for three days since, which has only brought down bushels of dead leaves, and advanced autumn without its change of hues. To make me amends, I found my new bedchamber finished, and it is so charming that I have lost all envy of Castle Howard. The bed would become Cleopatra on the Cydnus, or Venus if she was not past Cupid-bearing. In truth I fear, I must call it Sardanapalus's, who, Margaret may, without breach of veracity, assure strangers lived still longer ago than the Goths.

Pray remember what I am going to tell you against you find yourself *en chapitre*. Your church of York enjoys an estate given by Queen Philippa on the burial of her son William of Hatfield, and yet you have the conscience to let the poor prince's tomb be tossed about without a yard of earth it can call its own! My compliments to Mr. Alderson, to Argentile and Curan,

&c.; nay to the old woman's picture if you insist upon it,

yours ever

H. WALPOLE.

Arlington Street.

I happened to come hither to day on business, and find Dr. Brown has called twice, and left me in his own and your names a Goa stone and a blood stone seal, which both belonged to Mr. Gray. You know how really I shall value them, and I thank you very much, but I am greatly distressed how to thank Dr. Brown; he has not left a direction where he lodges, and I am impatient to express how much I am obliged, of which I will beg you, dear Sir, to bear witness; I certainly would not neglect waiting on him directly, if I knew where to find him. If I do not, I will write to Cambridge.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, Middleton Park, Sept 9, 1772.

Your letter of August 24 after travelling to and fro all over Yorkshire (as your letters to me usually do) found me in Oxfordshire only yesterday; let me, therefore, before I begin to answer it, beg and pray that you would write these three words, on the tablet of your memory, Aston near Sheffield, and that you would never think either the village or the parson of it of consequence enough to be found out without the neighbouring market town.

If you will take the pains to transcribe the anecdote you hint at about Queen Philippa, I verily believe it will

induce the Dean to pay her son William the honours which he ought; if not, I will fit up a tomb myself, if you will write the inscription. Mr. Stonhewer tells me that Dr. Brown was at his house, while in town, but that he is now at Cambridge, where I suppose you know he is now vice-chancellor. I shall mention the obliging manner in which you received the little memorials, which we picked out for you.

Pacquets that come from the Secretary's office (though above weight) are never charged at the Post Office. If, therefore, you would be pleased to make up those letters of Mr. Gray's, which you mentioned, either in one or two pacquets, and send them to Mr. Fraser at Lord Suffolk's office, to be forwarded to me, you may be assured of their coming safe, for Fraser is punctuality and care itself.

I return to Aston to-morrow. The weather has not been so favourable to my tour as might have been wished; I have however seen Blenheim, Nuneham and Rougham, and, if to-morrow is a tolerable day, shall see Stowe in my way homewards.

I have not time to add more at present than that I am, with the truest esteem,

dear Sir,
very sincerely yours
W. MASON.

Addendum to the scenes of dalliance and delight. —

In some fair island will we turn to grass
(With the Queen's leave) her elephant and ass;
Giants from Africa &c.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 19, 1772.

I am ashamed of having been so awkward about the direction, but in good truth I did not think it was necessary to specify what market town of Parnassus you lived near. For the future, I will remember that a letter to Governor Macdregs at Muxaduvad would in this age find its way better than to Virgil, if he was living at Hampstead. I shall go to town next week, and will consign Gray's letters as you order, to Mr. Fraser. I need not say that there are several things you will find it necessary to omit, and indeed, though to any one that knew him and me, they would be charming, I question whether you will find more than a very few proper for the public taste. That same public taste is the taste of the public, and it is a prodigious quantity of no tastes, generally governed by some very bad taste, that goes to the composition of a Public: and it is much better to give them nothing, than what they do not comprehend and which they consequently misunderstand, because they will think they comprehend, and which, therefore, must mistake. I do not know whether it is not best that good writings should appear very late, for they who by being nearest in time are nearest to understanding them, are also nearest to misapprehending. At a distant period such writings are totally dark to most, but are clear to the only few that one should wish to enjoy them. It must be a comfort to

great authors to reflect that in time they will be little read but by good judges.

Thank you for the new couplet; I have repeated it to myself forty times, and laughed as often; it is at least as good as any of the rest. The papers, alas! will tell you that I am doomed to sojourn in Egypt, and must call cousins with Colonel Lutterel who thinks it

> —— The sweetest of all earthly things,
> To live with princes and to talk of kings!

Not that I am removing to the palace neither. No I hear the five mile act is drawing up against us too, but I have a strange sang-froid, and bear my honours and disgraces with equal temper: yet the former are showered upon me: but this very day, Mr. Garrick, who has dropped me these three years, has been here by his own request, and told Mr. Raftor how happy he was at the reconciliation. I did not know we had quarrelled, and so omitted being happy too. He would not have been so much diverted, as I was the other day, I believe: Mr. Granger lent me a book, called Sketches and Characters of the most eminent and singular Persons now living, printed a year or two ago. My brother is mentioned and said to be the only *surviving* son of a late great minister. I was charmed with finding that though I have so often played the fool, I am still so fortunate as to be thought dead and gone. I will take care not to undeceive the kind person, who scorns to disturb my ashes. Apropos to Mr. Granger, he is dying to have your print, and swears as much as he loves a print

of any body only because it is a print of somebody, that he shall value yours for your own sake, and because he admires you infinitely. He has promised me an unique print, in return, of King Charles the first's chimney sweeper, and I am sure you will not prevent my collection from being enriched with such a curiosity.

You are perfectly indifferent I hope about the revolution in Sweden, and do not care whether the poor people are to be slaves to the King or House of Lords.

I intend to make a list of all that are going to shun me in public and squeeze my hand in private, assuring me how excessively glad they are of my niece's good fortune, and of all that will *not* squeeze my hand till they see me at St. James's again, and then pinch half my fingers off with protestations of their joy. I have gone through all this farce in the former part of my life, therefore the repetition will divert me the more; when my father fell, the good Bishop of Carlisle, my old friend, came to condole with me, and to express his fears that we should all go to the Tower, though he could scarce contain his button-mouth from smiling. Even then I had the happy carelessness to be indifferent to what was passing, and it grievously offended Sir John Barnard. I was sitting under him in the House of Commons; somebody asked me if I would go to Vauxhall one day in the next week—"Vauxhall" said I, "bless me—*we* are all going to Siberia." Well! one cannot help it if one's niece Dolgoruchi marries the Czar, but at least one is not liable to have the knut, if there is a change of decoration. I am not at all desirous that Kirgate my

printer should, as no doubt he would, say like Caxton of Earl Tiptoft, (I had rather it had been Earl Rivers for the royal marriage sake) "O good blessed Lord God! what grete losse was it of that noble vertuous and well disposd Lord! The Axe then did at one blow cut off more learning, than was left in the heads of all the surviving nobility." — I hope he would except my Lord Chancellor, my Lord Rochford, and the Bishop of London.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

I hope to have an opportunity soon of sending you safely Mr. Gray's print, and also his Catalogue of Antiquities, Scenes, &c., which is now printed off, and also the Anglo-Indian clergyman I formerly mentioned.

I am much interested that you should be at loo tables, &c., in three weeks time to hear what people say, and to keep your countenance at the same time; so pray get upon your legs, or I'll send Dr. Caverhill to you, to make you whether you will or no. Fine jesting, say you. But I hope you excuse it in a man that never had the gout. But who nevertheless can sympathize on occasion, and at present is sincerely sorry at your long illness, and heartily wishes your speedy recovery, being at all times,

dear Sir,

very sincerely yours

W. MASON.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, Aston, Oct. 6, 1772.

Since I had the honour of answering your last, I have had an application from a young gentleman, now on his travels, for a recommendatory letter or two to some person of fashion at Paris, that he may by that means be introduced into good company. When he went abroad about this time twelvemonth, Lord Holdernesse, at my request, gave him an introduction of this kind to some other places, but I cannot now with propriety repeat my application to him on this account. Therefore I have written by this post to Lord Nuneham, and I take also the liberty of writing to you to request the favour of a letter, but at the same time desire you not to comply with my request, if it be in any sort disagreeable to you.

The gentleman's name is Mr. Foljambe, of an ancient family and good fortune in this neighbourhood. He is in company with a Mr. Townshend, and is now on his way from Vienna, and I suppose will reach Paris in about a week or ten days from the date of this. He is not above three and twenty, consequently no *philosophe*, and who I suppose would, therefore, choose to be recommended to some person of the world, rather than a St. Lambert or a Marmontel. All that I can say for him is that he is a genteel well-behaved young man, with sense and accomplishments sufficient not to make your recommendation improper to any person you may choose to write; but (I repeat it again) if you dislike

writing these kind of letters, I beg you will consider this letter as not written, and to assure yourself that I shall only be sorry for having made an improper request. It is necessary, however, for me to add that his address is à Monr. Foljambe, chez Messrs Tourton et Bauer, Banquiers, Place des Victoires, and I suppose a letter under cover to him sent thither would certainly reach him in time to be of the service desired.

Believe me to be, dear Sir,
your much obliged and most sincere servant
W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

DEAR SIR, Strawberry Hill, Oct. 13, 1772.

I doubt you will have thought me very inattentive to your orders, but, alas! it is far from being my fault. I have been in my bed this fortnight with the gout in every limb, and have not the use of either hand or foot.

Were I at liberty, I fear I could be but of little use to your friend. The acquaintance I had in the Parliament have left Paris, and are retired into the provinces: I have left off and had not seen in my three last journeys the philosophers and litterati; the house of Choiseul is dispersed: the President Henaut, where I used to sup frequently, is dead and the house broke up. In short I have no connection left at Paris, but with my old blind friend and her society, which would not at all suit a young man of three and twenty. The best

person to whom I could have have recommended him, the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, mother of the duke, is lately dead, and I have no more friends at court. If the young gentleman goes into Italy I can be useful to him at Florence and Naples, and will give him letters thither very willingly. I dont know whether any body had had a curiosity about your last letter but one, but I did not receive it till six days after it was dated.

I will not say any more, because I have no more to say, but about my own sufferings, with which I do not wish to grieve anybody.

I am, dear Sir,
yours most sincerely
HORACE WALPOLE.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, Aston, Nov. 5, 1772.

Lord and Lady Strafford called here about ten days ago, and told me that that they heard you was much better, but since that I have had a letter from his Lordship in which he tells me your gout still continues. I, therefore, cannot help troubling you with this, to beg you would order your servant to give me a line of information.

I found lately among Mr. Gray's prints, a proof of the unfinished head from your picture of Eckarts. If you choose to have it, I will send it you by the first opportunity. I will give you no more trouble at pre-

sent than to assure you that I most sincerely wish you a speedy recovery and that I am

most faithfully yours

W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

DEAR SIR, Strawberry Hill, Nov. 10, 1772.

Having from the shipwreck of all my limbs recovered the use of three fingers, I cannot employ them better than in thanking you for your kind letter and enquiry. Six weeks finish to-morrow, and I have not been yet out of my bedchamber, and little out of my bed, till lately, and in the middle of the day; the amendment is so slow, and so dispiriting, that I find it almost as difficult to recover of the recovery as of the gout; but I will not talk of it, though *I pay it off with thinking.*

You will oblige me much with that print of Mr. Gray — you may guess how much I have thought of him lately, and how I have been weighing a shorter life against pain!

I see nobody; I know nothing; I cannot amuse you and will not tire you; the most pleasing thing that you could tell me, would be, that you had some thoughts of London. Adieu!

dear Sir,

yours very sincerely

HOR. WALPOLE.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 26, 1772.

The papers, my only company at present, tell me that Elfrida is brought upon the stage, and pleases exceedingly. I am rejoiced, and want to go and see it — but as I am not near being in a situation of going to plays, I trust I shall only wait to see it more agreeably, for you cannot be so unnatural a parent, as not to come and see Miss Mason in her glory, and then I flatter myself you will let me accompany you. Nothing could make me in cold blood expose myself to that fiery trial — yours was not so, for Elfrida's character was established long ago, and you have had none of the plague and anxiety — but I own I scarce conceive a greater pleasure than to see a dramatic work of ones own crowned with success, and be witness to it, provided it were well acted. Come, come, you must come and see it; — do not deny yourself so lawful a pleasure and that you deserve to enjoy — I mend so slowly, that it seems to me that it will be supreme enjoyment to walk cross my own room.

Yours ever

HOR. WALPOLE.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, Aston, Dec. 1, 1772.

I was just going to give you some prudent cautions

about locking up your *Mother* (who in conformity of character is your daughter too) when I received your congratulations on the rape committed on my illegitimate girl at Covent Garden. Can you seriouly think that any thing that old fumbler, Dr. Arne, can do to her is likely to come to good, no surely; though little Mr. Coleman puts his finger into the pye too. Depend upon it if the Play (or Poem, call it which you will) has any success, it is owing to no intrinsic merit of its own, but only from its producing to the eye of the audience, such a strange sight as twenty British virgins. In England (says Shakspeare) "any strange beast makes a man" what then must twenty strange beasts do. But do not you think it somewhat cavalier in Mr. Coleman, to do what he has done without any previous intimation of it to me. I should have known nothing of the matter had not my bookseller heard of it, and demanded the property of the Chorus books then printing off. One of these he has sent me, in which the odes are so lopt and mangled, that they are worse now than the productions of Handel's poet, Dr. Morell. One instance I must give you because it is curious. In my fourth ode I called the first man a *godlike* youth, authorised so to do by the first chapter of Genesis. Dr. Arne calls him a *royal* youth. An epithet which I fancy will be approved no where but at St. James's, for it carries the *jus divinum* higher than Sir Robert Filmer carried it. We have heard of a King Abraham and a King Noah, but a King Adam is quite new. However as the said King

was no author, it will make no addition to your royal list.

As I cannot think you serious in your congratulations, so I think you still in jest, when you say you can hardly conceive a greater pleasure than to see a dramatic work of ones own crowned with success &c. I conclude from this that your late fit of the gout has brought you back to the age of five and twenty. But if you be really serious, pray make Mr. Coleman a present of your Mysterious Mother; I will be answerable she procures you that pleasure, provided you admit my alterations, for (*absit superbia*) I am confident they will do her more good than any thing Mr. Coleman has done to Elfrida; and if so, from the superior interest and novelty of the fable, there is not the least doubt of her being crowned with success. Yet I think you should stipulate for Mrs. Yates, instead of Mrs. Hartley: though I know neither of them. I am informed that Garrick is in a fidget about Elfrida, which indeed is the only thing that pleases me in the whole business; he says, had he thought it would have been agreeable to Mr. Mason, he would have brought it on himself, and adds, "surely Mr. Coleman acquainted him with the design," &c., This would almost lead me to forgive Coleman, was such a man worth ones forgiveness. I conjecture that in a fortnight, or three weeks, you may find occasion to write to me on a subject we talked about when we were at the Black Swan at York. Whatever news you send me on that head I must desire you to write as of a third unknown person, as I

suspect at that time I shall find the seals of my correspondents not very firm. This paragragh will convince you that I ought not hastily to come to town, even if Elfrida had more charms than Lady Pentweazle to bring me there, which indeed she has not.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, Jan. 9, 1773.

I want to send you my Grammont and two numbers of miscellaneous Antiquities, how shall I convey them? the latter are published, of the other there are only a hundred copies printed, and as a quarter of the number is gone to France, you must take it as a great present. I do not say it was printed *for my friends*; who would have an hundred? all I meant was not to make my favourite book common. For the Antiquities, I care not whether the Critical Review, or Dr. Milles, dislikes them. There is, I heard yesterday, another man who wrote about some college in Cambridge, that has printed a new pamphlet against my Richard III, it is to appear in the second volume of the Society's *discoveries*. I shall wait with patience to see it then or never.

I have been here about three weeks, but have not yet arrived at more than taking the air, when there is a morsel of sun — As I have been fifty-five years in town, I find it extremely tolerable to see nothing but Piccadilly as I go to Hyde Park — you may comfort

yourself, dear Sir, in *your* way too. If Mr. Colman has violated Elfrida, Mr. Garrick has cut out the scene of the grave-diggers in Hamlet. I hope he will be rewarded with a place in the French Academy. I was indeed surprised at that play being revived by so good a courtier. — *The adulterous Queen of Denmark* was certainly revived with great propriety just now. I suppose *grave-diggers* shock Kings and Queens more than the gallantries of their relations. Obrien's duel, translated from the *Philosophe sans le scavoir*, was damned the first night. I saw the original at Paris when it was first acted, and though excessively touched with it, wondered how the audience came to have sense enough to taste it. I thought then it would not have succeeded here, the touches are so simple and delicate and natural. Accordingly it did not. I have been reading the translation, and cried over it heartily.

From Cambridge I am told there is a very good print of Gray, done by one Henshaw, as a companion to yours. Is it for your account of him? how does that work advance? you have forgot, but pray remember to send me one of your own prints for my friend Mr. Granger.

Lord Newnham is come to town, and has been so good to visit my invalidity twice, what a meritorious pilgrimage it would be if you would too! I am perfectly reliques, I have nothing but dry bones left. You shall be rewarded with a shin-bone, which is of as much use to any body as to the owner.

H. W.

P.S. You know to be sure why I am exceedingly disappointed.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, Aston, Jan. 14, 1773.

I was meditating a how-do-ye letter to you, when yours came to give me the pleasure of knowing that your gout has not returned upon you; a friend of mine at York almost eight years older than you are, who was an absolute cripple five years, so as not to be able to move, and who took Le Febure's medicine two years ago has just now taken unto him a wife. I send you this anecdote to comfort you, though perhaps you will think there is as little comfort in it as in Mrs. Quickly's to Sir John Falstaff, who bad him not think of God; and will say in return, Heaven be thanked I am not yet so bad as to think of a wife. I must be cold upwards and upwards before I think of such a remedy.

I trust when you do me the honour to send me your Grammont, I shall value it as I ought to do, being proud to be ranked even amongst your hundred friends, though, at the same time I have the vanity to believe I do not stand in the number of the last fifty, even if your French friends are in the first set. The carrier here is so very uncertain that I will not trust him with it, I, therefore, must desire you to keep it till I can get it by some private hand, but the second number of your Antiquities (for I have the first) if you would only send it to Mr. Fraser at Lord Suffolk's office, he

would inclose it in a couple of pacquets and send it me by the post. Colman and I have passed two pert letters to one another, in which I think, I out-templard the templar. I agree with you perfectly in the honors you think Garrick entitled to, and I trust he will have them, I am sure he would be pleased by them. Do not be disappointed; what is delayed is not laid aside. Wilful will do it, *coûte qui coûte*, but at present *non satis magnum theatrum mihi estis.*

Yours is the first account I have heard of either Henshaw or his print. I shall be happy if it turns out so well as your account. I have this day sent off, by a person going from hence to town, a parcel, which contains the print of Mr. Gray, done from your picture, and a Doctor and a Minerva a la Indienne, — three uniques; what would Dr. Grainger give for such a present? as to my own, I believe Stonhewer has a few left. I will write to him for one, when he returns from Euston. I am very glad Lord Nuneham sees you often, he is one of those very few that talk and think just as one likes; for myself I am absolutely tied down here for the winter or else assure yourself, dear Sir, I would come to visit you without the reward you offer, nay, if it would do you any good, I would willingly part with half of my too fat calves to dress up your shin bones. Believe me to be

very sincerely yours

W. MASON.

The life goes on very slowly, there is so much transcription.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, Feb. 1, 1773.

I have received and thank you much, dear Sir, for the print of Gray and the two Indian paintings — pray, tell me more about the latter: the Minerva is very curious, and both are prettily painted: I am sorry they are inseparable, like Indamora and Lindamira. You would have been thanked sooner, but I have had a relapse and kept my bed five days, nor can yet put on a shoe again. Mr. Garrick, who has had both stone and gout, is still Ranger, and dances a country dance! I do not envy his performances, but his *capabilities.*

I agree with you heartily about Lord Nuneham; nor know any thing so comfortable as one that talks and thinks, *just as one likes,* which I find a greater rarity than any print or picture in my collection, and to my sorrow I observe that the rareness increases every day: though unlike other curiosities, they are *not to be bought.* Your Elfrida, Mrs. Hartley, I am told, is the most perfect beauty that was ever seen. I can neither go to see Mrs. Hartley, nor Elfrida; but as I can read, I long for any of Elfrida's relations.

Have you heard of Mr. Andrew Stuart's letters to Lord Mansfield? they will inform you how abominable abuse is, and how you may tear a man limb from limb with the greatest good-breeding. Alas! we are barbarians and know nothing of these refinements.

Yours ever

H. W.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, Aston, Feb. 23, 1773.

I should not have been so remiss in my enquiries after you, had not Lord Nuneham told me that you were a convalescent, I beg his pardon, he would not have used so pedantic a word for the world. However, he told me that notwithstanding so long and painful an illness, he never saw you in better spirits or look more healthy, which account I assure you gave me very sincere satisfaction. That awkward business, which being a deed without a name, one can hardly write intelligibly about, was another cause of my silence. I waited and waited, but in short I have now made up my mind about it, expectation is over, and I verily believe *hush* money has been taken. It would be wrong to enter into particulars, yet after a full month's time this suspicion surely is not without good grounds. O that I had Sir Andrew Steward's letters before me, they would I think produce something, which in future might console one for the innocent sheep that is lost. I am just this moment in an excellent humour for the undertaking, because I am very much out of humour. Is it not possible to send it with the Count de Grammont? (I heartily beg his pardon for putting him in such bad company, but his politesse I trust will excuse it.) If it be, and you would be pleased to send them to Mr. Varelst's in St. James's Square, with a message "to desire them to send them to me with the first things

they send by the waggon to Aston," I should be sure of receiving them safe; though perhaps it would not be within a fortnight.

I can only say with respect to the Indian paintings, that I found them in a book of Mr. Varelst's among many others really Indian. He found me much struck with the red band, &c., of the clergyman, and Minerva, happening to be on the other side of the leaf, she also came to my share; he told me that he had in town several other English prints coloured by the Indians in the same fantastic manner.

I believe I have not yet thanked you for the second number of the Antiquities. You have made the most (as you always do) of the little you had to do withal, and Sir Thomas's life will be read with pleasure, by people that cannot wade through his speech, amongst whom (pardon my Antiquarian infirmity) is your humble servant; though, I had the *hippocricy* to scold my curate for owning the same defect of taste.

Pray do not intrust any of your bon mots to Lord Nuncham to send to me, he forgot every syllable you said about my negotiations with administration concerning Wolfe's Epitaph, for which I cannot forgive him.

I have altered my plan of Mr. Gray's life very much from the manner I first intended, and the sketch which you saw. I divide it into five or six sections, each of which introduces a distinct series of letters, poems, fragments, &c. The three first contain his correspondence with Mr. West. I have written almost all that I

shall have occasion to write as his biographer; but as his editor, I shall have many occasional notes to insert, which perhaps will be done best as the work goes through the press. I believe I shall be able to send you soon by a private hand what I have written, but in the meantime I send you three or four paragraphs where your name must necessarily be mentioned, which I would choose to alter entirely to your satisfaction, if you choose to have them altered. I could wish if you have any letters on literary matters, which he writ latterly, *i. e.* from the year 1745 or 46 to his death, for I fancy I shall not make much use of the more juvenile ones which you sent me. But, as the latter collections will be miscellaneous, any letters of this sort would come in with a good grace. I have already some to Dr. Wharton, Stonhewer, Beattie and myself that are excellent.

Pray (in the name of critical astonishment) what can be Macpherson's translations of Homer? has he Fingalised? has he Temoraisd him? I'll lay my life he has. Homer *à la Erse*, must be a curiosity with a vengeance. I hope it is printed *in usum Delphini* and dedicated to my Lord of Chester. But to release you from my epistolary long-windedness I will only add, that I am, dear Sir,

most truly yours

W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

March 2, 1773.

I am not surprised, my dear Sir, that satire should be bought off, when infamous scandals on the most virtuous characters are printed at the Louvre *in usum Delphini*. But shall the muse of retribution be silent? shall a *censeur roial* clip her eagle wings? shall she not dip her penfeather in the blood of patriot martyrs, and write their *vindicias* in crimson hues? you to whom the noble quill is descended, must wield the weapon, and revenge Sidney and Russel — probably, deplore the sinking cause for which they fell in vain! your writings will outlive the laws of England — I scorn to say of *Britain* since it implies Scotland. *Her* laws will replace ours, though their most remarkable one is suspended in favour of him, whom you call Sir Andrew Stuart; I mean, that against *leasing-making*. You shall have the odious book, which is indeed as silly as it is detestable: nor does one know whether the man is more malignant or absurd. He has given such proofs of the villany, folly and infamous treachery of Charles II, James II and Louis XIV, as would make any nature but a royal one shudder, nay laugh, if indignation did not harrow up the muscles. Come, I will make *you* laugh even in your scornful mood. He justifies James II against Burnet's charge of thinking only of saving his dogs, when he was in danger of being shipwrecked. How does he

defend him from the prelate's *lye* — it is Sir John's own word — why by a Scot's letter which says the Duke of York insisted on preserving a trunk of papers of such consequence to himself and his brother, that he would as soon part with his life. The tenderness of a trunk's life is indeed superlative proof of humanity. The dear trunk filled at least, I suppose, the place of one or two drowned men! and what damning papers must that trunk have contained! Need I tell you at *whose* expense these treasures were transcribed? read the fond letters between their most religious and christian Majesties Charles II and Louis XIV, and very few *mutatis mutandis* will suffice to open your ideas; need I tell you that Sir John Dalrymple, the accuser of bribery, was turned out of his place of Solicitor of the customs for taking bribes from brewers? — *sed Jove nondum barbato.* — I will only wash my hands and change the subject: what shall I say? how shall I thank you for the kind manner in which you submit your papers to my correction? but if you are friendly I must be just, I am so far from being dissatisfied, that I must beg leave to sharpen your pen, and in that light only, with regard to myself, would make any alterations in your text. I am conscious that in the beginning of the differences between Gray and me, the fault was mine. I was too young, too fond of my own diversions, nay, I do not doubt, too much intoxicated by indulgence, vanity, and the insolence of my situation, as a Prime Minister's son, not to have been inattentive and insensible to the feelings of one

I thought below me; of one, I blush to say it, that I knew was obliged to me; of one whom presumption and folly perhaps made me deem not my superior *then* in parts, though I have since felt my infinite inferiority to him. I treated him insolently: he loved me and I did not think he did. I reproached him with the difference between us, when he acted from conviction of knowing he was my superior; I often disregarded his wishes of seeing places, which I would not quit other amusements to visit, though I offered to send him to them without me. Forgive me, if I say that his temper was not conciliating. At the same time that I will confess to you that he acted a more friendly part, had I had the sense to take advantage of it; he freely told me of my faults. I declared I did not desire to hear them, nor would correct them. You will not wonder that with the dignity of his spirit, and the obstinate carelessness of mine, the breach must have grown wider, till we became incompatible. After this confession, I fear you will think I fall far short of the justice I promised him, in the words which I should wish to have substituted to some of yours. If you think them inadequate to the state of the case, as I own they are, preserve this letter, and let some future Sir John Dalyrmple produce it to load my memory — but I own I do not desire that any ambiguity should aid his invention to forge an account for me. If you have no objection, I would propose your narrative should run thus, and contain no more, till a more proper time shall come for stating the truth, as I have related it to you.

While I am living, it is not pleasant to read ones private quarrels discussed in magazines and newspapers.

In Section second.

"But I must here add in order to forewarn my readers of a disappointment that this correspondence (viz. during his travels) is defective towards the end, and includes no description either of Venice or its territory, the last places which Mr. Gray visited. This defect was occasioned by an unfortunate disagreement between him and Mr. W., which arising from the great difference of temper between the pensive, curious philosophy of the former, and the gay and youthful inconsideration of the latter, occasioned their separation at Reggio."

Note to be added. "In justice to the memory of so respectable a friend, Mr. W. enjoins me to charge him with the chief blame in their quarrel, confessing that more attention, complaisance and deference on his part to a warm friendship, and to a very superior understanding and judgment might have prevented a rupture, that gave much uneasiness to both, and a lasting concern to the survivor, though in the year 1744 a reconciliation was effected between them by a lady, who wished well to them both."

This note I think will specify all that is necessary, and though humiliating to me, it is due to my friend, and a vindication I owe him. It is also all that seems necessary either in section the second or fourth. As to section third, it is far from accurate, and in one respect what I am sure you will have too much regard to me to mention, as

it would hurt me in a very sensible part. You will I am sure sacrifice it, to my intreaty, especially as it is to introduce nothing to the prejudice of Mr. Gray: nay I think he would rather dislike the mention. I mean the place that I might have obtained for him from my Father. That I should have tried for such emolument for him, there is no doubt; at least have proposed it to him, though I am far from being clear he would have accepted it. I know that till he did accept the professorship from the Duke of Grafton, it was my constant belief that he would scorn any place. My inclination to be serviceable to him was so intense, that when we went abroad together, I left a will behind, in which I gave him all I then possessed in the world—it was indeed a very trifling all! With regard to what my Father would have done, let me recall the period to you or tell it to you, if you do not know it. I came over in the end of September; my Father resigned in the beginning of the following February. Considering how unfavourable to him the new Parliament was, it would, I believe, with any partiality to me, have been impossible for him to have given away any place worth Gray's acceptance, but to a member of parliament during those four critical months; but this, my dear Sir, is not the part that touches me most. They are your kind words *favourite Son.* Alas! if I ever was so, I was not so thus early! nor were I so, would I for the world have such a word dropped; it would stab my living brother to the soul, who I have often said, adored his Father, and of all his children

loved him the best. You see I am making a pretty general confession, but can claim absolution on no foundation but that of repentance; you will, at least I am sure, not wound an innocent, meritorious brother from partiality to me. Do just as you think fit about his letters to me; I never thought above a very few proper for publication, but gave them up to you to prove my deference and unreserve. As I still think them charming, I beg to have them again; I have scarce any of his letters that I can call literary, for they only relate to informations he gave me for my own trifling books; and I should be ashamed to show how ill I employed such time as his. Indeed they contain little more than the notices I have mentioned to have received from him; whatever I have of that sort are at Strawberry, and as I am but just able yet, after two and twenty weeks, to take the air in Hyde Park, God knows when I shall be able to go to Twickenham; life itself is grown far less dear to me, since I seem to see a prospect of surviving all that is worth living for. Mr. Martin, my reversionary heir is ready in every sense to encourage me in these sentiments. Three months ago when the newspapers proclaimed me dying, he sent a treasury-creature to my clerk to know the worth of my place. The young man was shocked and asked why Mr. Martin did not apply to me? No, said the agent, Mr. Martin would think that too indelicate. However, not to be too delicate himself when his principal's interest was concerned, he threatened my clerk with Mr. Martin's turning him out as soon as I

should be dead. I recollect Martin's practicing at the target for six months before he fought Wilkes, and say if I am to blame in a resolution of never dining with my heir apparent.

I have written such a volume here, and so much on Dalrymples and Martins and Kings, that my hand pretends to feel a little gout, and pleads that it is too hard to be forced to talk of Macpherson too. You may be sure, however, that I have not read nor shall read his Homer travesti; all I will add is, that the Scotch seem to be proving they are really descended from the Irish. Dalrymple has discovered humanity to a trunk; Macpherson, I suppose, has been proving by his version, how easy it was to make a Fingal out of Homer, after having tried to prove that Fingal was an original poem. But we live in an age of contradictions. Mr. *Mac* Jenkinson, the other day on the thirty-nine articles, called Laud a *very very great man*, and in the same breath, stigmatized those apostles of the Stuarts, David Hume and Lord Bolinbroke. Can a house divided against itself stand? did not Bolinbroke beget Lord Mansfield and Andrew Stone? Did not Mansfield and Stone beget the Bishop of Chester? Are not atheism and bigotry first cousins? was not Charles II an atheist and a bigot? and does Mr. Hume pluck a stone from a church but to raise an altar to tyranny? Thank God, if we have as great rogues, as Buckingham, Arlington and Lauderdale, at least they are as great fools as Father Petre — for King James I find no parallel — he was sincere

in his religion. Adieu: I leave my name out to be supplied by

Sir John Dalrymple.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, March 2, 1773.

I received your letter so late yesterday, and had company all the evening, as I have had to day, that there was no possibility for me to answer the particulars of it. Nay, I do not know whether you will receive my answer this week or fortnight, for I am at the mercy of every body that pleases to visit me, and cannot be denied till I am able to visit too. You will receive the books as you directed. How you or your curate could want taste so much as not to go through Sir Thomas Wyat's oration, is inconceivable. It is the finest piece that has been composed, as some pedant said, *since the Romans died.* To punish you, I will certainly send you Mr. Home's new tragedy, as soon as it is published — or one of his former; I dare to say it will be all the same; though he says this is his best.

I do not wonder Lord Nuneham forgot my bon mots, for I am sure if I committed any, I have forgotten them myself.

Garrick has written a cantata for Millico's benefit: a lyre tumbled out of heaven to play to it; but it was so bad, the audience wished themselves at the devil. The only good thing I have seen this winter is an excellent

Papal Bull — I forgot to say above, that the town is so much of your and your curate's opinion about Sir T. Wyat's oration, that the miscellaneous antiquities have not sold above a fifth of them, so there will be no more. If Sir Thomas had abused Cranmer and Latimer instead of Bonner, he would have been more fashionable. Adieu! dear Sir,

yours faithfully

H. W.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, Aston, March 20, 1773.

I did not receive your parcel till two or three days ago, for which a thousand thanks. I was not so much a stranger to Sir John Dalrymple, as you do me the honour to suspect; five or six and twenty years ago, I was acquainted with him at college, travelled with him down into Yorkshire, lodged him and his Cambridge hack two or three days at my father's at Hull, and in return for my civilities, a year or two after he sent his brother-in-law to visit me at Pembroke Hall; which said brother was a declared rebel, hight Wully Hamilton, who writ the tears of Scotland, 1745, and it was next to miracle that Bishop Keene (with whom I was then very ill on account of his regulations) did not take us both into custody. It was Andrew Steward's letters which I wanted, so I have only to be sorry that I knighted him. However as I had the first part of Sir John amongst Mr. Gray's books, I am not

displeased to have his second, though the little I have read in it has almost made me spew, — I beg your pardon, and now as you wash your hands I'll take a clean pen.

This comes by my unantiquarian curate, who brings you also all the papers I have hitherto arranged relative to the memoirs. I must beg you to revise them and to make your remarks on the blank pages with a pencil, and if you favour me with any additional notes so much the better; I flatter myself you will like the plan better than the execution, yet as to the style I hope to mend that as it goes through the press. I have already corrected the passages you objected to, pretty exactly (except in a word or two) according to your letter. I have only to say further on this head, that the letter does your own heart infinite honour, and tenderly touches mine, insomuch that nothing but your express order would prevail on me to print the note in question. You will find amongst these papers an Italian letter of West's and an answer to it in the same language, these relate to Mr. Gray's being about to settle in the Temple and to your going abroad; something ought to be extracted from them to make the first series of letters complete, and some account given of your invitation to him to travel with you; of this I have no materials to go upon, and, therefore, wish you would fill the chasm. I also return you all the letters you favoured me with except two or three, which I shall use in the following sections. I must hint that (if you preserve these) it would be better to have them trans-

cribed on account of the boyish beginnings and endings. I send you also some of Mr. Trollop's letters, the author of the poem on the Alphabet, from which and from Gray's, a more perfect copy might be taken of that whimsical yet clever production.

Lord N. sent me above a week ago an Heroic Epistle, &c. I have heard nothing since about it except that Mr. Montagu tells me he is assured by C. Fox that Ansty is the author of it, which is a probable conjecture. I was sorry to see a chasm in the 95th line, 'tis a reflection upon the age we live in that it was not fill'd up. No name could be more proper than Martin's now that Calcraft is dead, and I adopt that reading in my own study. I am curious to hear more of the reception of the Poem, because I think it such a one as would make some little noise in the world, at least for a day or two, and therefore I shall hope for some anecdotes concerning it when Mr. Alderson returns, who will have my directions to call upon you for these papers in four or five days after he leaves them with you. My new pen is now dirty enough to resume Sir John Dalrymple's subject. I think there are evident internal marks of forgery in Barillon's memoir relating to A. Sidney. He first gives the French King his character, and then says, I have given him the sum you ordered and he wants more, could Louis have sent a specify'd sum to a man whose weight in parliament he was unacquainted with; for my own part I will never believe it, even if Sir John's employer should with his own royal mouth read to me the original papers. Adieu,

my dear Sir, and that you may live to see a thousand Martyns and Dalrymples kick the air not in straw stuff effigy, but infamous reality, is the sincere wish of

your affectionate servant

W. MASON.

I take the more pleasure in our present uncommonly fine weather, because I hope it will tend to perfect your recovery. My amanuensis, Charles, desires you to excuse his Greek and Latin.

On looking out Mr. Trollop's verses I find on one of the papers a fragment of Mr. Gray's, of a history of Hell, pray take notice of the conclusion concerning king-craft and tell me whether he was not a prophet as well as poet.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, Aston, May 7, 1773.

The very obliging, I had almost said flattering letter, which you sent me by Mr. Alderson, cannot on one of its subjects be answered by me at present, which I am sorry for, because I have an excellent story to tell you relative to it. It is an account of a stratagem, by which ten good golden guineas were obtained from a certain person, by another, to which such a sum was of great service; this is all I can say, but the detail of the matter is highly comic, and you shall have it the first safe opportunity. In the meantime you will per-

ceive that this was not the primary end of the scheme, but that it served another excellent purpose.

Lord Holderness has been here in his way to Hornby, he did me the honour to dine with me and was wonderfully gracious, which astonished me much, as I thought my late resignation of the chaplainship would have made him quite out of temper with me, and that he could hardly have concealed it, but he is a better courtier than I even ever thought him before, accordingly I strove to be as courtly as possible in return. Our talk was entirely on general subjects and literary matters, such as Sir John D. and A. Steward's book, and the Heroic Epistle. I contraverted none of his opinions, only as he seemed to think that the Epistle had merit, I ventured to say that I thought it worthy of Soame Jennyns, had it suited his polite sentiments, he replied "so it was, but S. J. would never have used that *harsh* kind of satire." From his Lordship's account I find that it is generally supposed to be Temple Lutterell's, although Almon declares it to be the work of a young man, and his first work. After all we live in an age of miracles, that two such writers as he and Junius should keep themselves concealed. Next Monday I go to live at York for three whole calendar months. Hard as my fate is to quit the country for such a town, and though I now feel myself fastened for life to a piece of preferment attended with this annual inconvenience, yet I feel myself much more content, than I should be with any exchange, which would put me under obligations to these persons who only could

procure such exchange, and I trust you will give me full credit for what I now say. I mean to put my memoirs of Mr. Gray to the press there, and to print the work leisurely, so that it may come out after next Christmas. Accept my best thanks for the few strictures you have made, I wish they had been more numerous, all of them shall be attended to.

Pray have you any letter relative to the Long Story, I mean to introduce it in the fourth section, and think that a letter and a note, would be its best introduction. I beg my compliments to Mr. Nicolls and congratulations on his return home; if he has any letters which he thinks proper to publish, you will inform him of my plan and he will send them or not as he chuses: those which contain his sentiments of books, &c., will be most eligible.

Many thanks to you for Mr. A. Steward's book, it is valuable on many accounts, as containing the character of a Scotsman drawn by a Scotsman, and as being able to rouse the indignation of an Englishman like me, which I confess it did when I read it, though as I never dipt into the Douglas cause before, I am not sure how far I ought to have been indignant. I am told (by a friend of Lord M.'s indeed) that it proves nothing against his Lordship. If so, I am sure nothing can be proved about any thing.

I have seen none of the plays you mention, I always reserve these for any light lutestring reading in my summer residence at York.

I fear you have no thoughts of a tour again, this

summer to Wentworth castle, if so, I know not when I shall have the pleasure of seeing you: however, absent or present, I hope you will always believe me to have the highest sense of your partiality to me and that you will believe me to be, dear Sir,

very sincerely yours

W. MASON.

I hope this late cold weather brings not with it any return of your complaint.

Since I writ the foregoing, I have heard that the cathedral will be shut up till Whitsunday on account of repairing the roof, so that I have a reprieve of three weeks. Pray are these letters of Lady Rachel Russel of consequence? Lord H. could tell me nothing about them, but he spoke high things of a certain poem of the Duke de Nivernois. As you favour my obscurity sometimes with a literary journal, and unlike other journalists make the account more entertaining than the thing itself, pray in your next mention these two publications.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, May 15, 1773.

You may imagine I am impatient to hear the history of the ten golden guineas. Though any body will take such a sum, I thought few would fish for so little. We are in a higher style of cheating and plundering.

What can I tell you of literary matters? nothing of the poem you enquire after by Mons^r. de Nivernois. He has written an hundred or two of fables, and read some of them to the Academy, but told me it was thought wrong for a nobleman in France to publish. How could he write, when he could be so far prejudiced? The fables are good, as far as anything can be so, that gives one no pleasure. There is I am told, a dialogue of Boileau and Horace written by the same nobleman and even published, not very lately. I have seen it formerly and thought I liked it.

Lady Russel's letters too I have seen formerly, they are to and from her director, a jacobite clergyman, who triumphs on her husband's martyrdom, and whom with her sense and spirit I should have thought she would have kicked out of her house. I am much surprised in this our day that the duchess gives leave for the publication. I should have expected that her conjugal piety, blended with *per*digious loyalty, would have concurred with her lord's shade in calling lord Russel *a very silly fellow*, as his grace did in Ireland, though he was pleased with the compliment of the mayor of Calais, who told him he hoped he was come with more pacific intentions than his great ancestor and namesake John Duke of Bedford, who had been their regent. There are two other answers to Sir J. Dalrymple, but not very good. The best answer is what he made himself to George Onslow, whom he told on warning him for traducing the immortal Sidney, that he had other papers which would have washed him as

white as snow. With this Sir John has been publickly reproached in print and has not gainsaid it. The upright soul!

Lord Holderness and you, who ought to be better judges than I am of the capabilities of court-bards, must excuse me if I think Soame Jenyns could no more have written the Heroic Epistle than I could the best scene in Shakspeare. Please to point out any poetry in Jenyns's works: his best are humour rhymed; and sneers checked by the court of Chancery from laughing out. Pope is more likely to have written the Heroic Epistle since his death, than Soame Jenyns during his life.

So much for what we *have* been reading, at present our ears listen and our eyes are expecting East Indian affairs, and Mr. Banks's voyage for which Dr. Hawksworth has received d'avance one thousand pounds from the voyager, and six thousand from the booksellers, Strahan and Co., who will take due care that we shall read nothing else till they meet with such another pennyworth. Sir J. Dalrymple, over and above all his glory has gained toward four thousand. Our Scotch Aldus's and Elzevirs keep down every publication they do not partake; and there is a society who contribute to every purchase they make of books, to keep the price at high-water mark. Another club of printsellers do the same. Woe be to those who do not deal with, and indeed enrich themselves by the monopolists!

The House of Commons has embarked itself in a wilderness of perplexities. Though Lord Clive was so

frank and high spirited as to confess a whole folio of his Machiavelism. They are so ungenerous as to have a mind to punish him for assassination, forgery, treachery and plunder, and it makes him very indignant. 'Tother night, because the House was very hot, and the young members thought it would melt their rouge and shrivel their nosegays, they all on a sudden, and the old folks too, voted violent resolutions, and determined the great question of the right of Sovereignty, though, till within half an hour of the decision, the whole house had agreed to weigh and modify the questions a little more; being so fickle, Lord Clive has reason to hope that after they have voted his head off, they will vote it on again the day after he has lost it.

I have been looking over all Mr. Gray's letters as you desired, but cannot find one relating to the Long Story: he therefore probably gave it me at some time that he was with me. I do not know where Mr. Nicolls resides in the country, or would ask your question; he is gone out of town.

Though it will certainly be more convenient to you to have the life printed under your eye at York, I cannot but lament my press is not to be honoured with it, though in sooth two capital reasons are strong against it. The first, that the pace of my single printer, who has not even an aid-de-camp or devil, is so wondrous slow, that your work would not be finished in this century; the other, is that I have not the patience necessary for correcting the press. Gray was for ever reproaching me with it, and in one of the letters I have

just turned over, he says, "pray send me the proof sheets to correct, for you know you are not capable of it." It is very true, and I hope future edition-mongers will say of those of Strawberry-hill, they have all the beautiful negligence of a gentleman. Mr. Jerningham has just desired my consent to his dedicating a new poem to me. I remonstrated, and advised him to Augustus, the patron supreme; he would not be said, nay, and modesty, as it always does when folks are pressing, submitted, but it was to be a homage to my *literary merit*, oh! that was too much, I downright was rude. Sir, says I, literary merit I have none, literary merit will be interpreted, learning, science, and the Lord knows what, that I have not a grain of. I have forgot half my Latin and all my Greek. I never could learn mathematics; never had patience for natural philosophy or chess; I have read divinity, which taught me that no two persons agree, and metaphysics which nobody understands: and consequently I am little the wiser for either. I know a little modern history of France and England, which those who wrote did not know; and a good deal of genealogy, which could not be true unless it were written by every mother in every family. If I have written any thing tolerable, it was to show I had common sense, not learning, I value my writings very little and many others value them still less, which it would be very unreasonable in me to resent, since nobody forgets them so soon as myself, and, therefore, dear Sir, &c. Well he has consented, and I hope from his example, I never shall be called the learned author again,

as I have been by magazines, when magazines were so cruel as to wish me well.

I should not have said, my pen is my witness, half so much of myself, if I had had any thing else to say—oh yes, I have. Mr. Duncombe has published a volume of my good Lord of Corke's letters to him from Italy. I fear Pliny would not give him his library for writing them, no more than his father did for thinking he could not write. I am glad your Cathedral shuts its doors on you; you did not want that omen of your never wearing a mitre, the cap of liberty becomes such head much better; though I believe you would be as singular as good Hoadley and wear them together, 'tis, therefore, I am so much

and ever yours

H. W.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, May 27, 1773.

I received your letter, dear Sir, your MS. and Gray's letters to me, by Mr. Alderson. Twenty things crowd about my pen and jostle and press to be said: as I came hither to day (my first flight since my illness) for a little air and to read you undisturbed, they shall all have their place in good time; but having so safe a conveyance for my thoughts, I must begin with the uppermost of them, the Heroic Epistle. I have read it so very often that I have got it by

heart, and as I am now master of all its beauties, I profess I like it infinitely better than I did, and yet I thought I liked it infinitely before; there is more wit, ten times more delicacy of irony, as much poetry and greater facility than, and as, in the Dunciad. But what signifies what I think? all the world thinks the same, except a dark corner, where its being so much disliked is still better praise. No soul, as I have heard, has guessed within an hundred miles. I catched at Anstey's name and I believe contributed to spread that notion. It has since been called Temple Lutterel's, and to my infinite honour mine. Lord Nuneham swears he should think so, if I did not commend it so excessively! oh how very vain I am! Sir William Chambers consoles himself with its having sold him three hundred copies of his book — I do not hear that the patron of arts consoles himself with any thing, but is heartily sore — He *would* read it insultingly to Chambers, but soon flung it down in a passion. It is already of the fourth edition. Thank you for giving my impatient heir, Sam. Martin, a niche. There is published a defence of negro slavery by his father.

But now, my dear Sir, as you have tapped this mine of talent, and it runs so richly and easily, for Heaven's and England's sake do not let it rust. You have a vein of irony and satire that the best of causes bleeds for having wanted. Point all your lightnings at that wretch Dalrymple, and yet make him but the footstool to the throne as you made poor simple Chambers. We are acting the very same scene Dalrymple has

brought to fuller light, sacrificing friends to stab heroes and martyrs. There are repeated informations from France that preliminaries of strict union are signed between that court and ours; Lord Stormont is the negotiator, and Lord Mansfield, who has not courage enough even to be Chancellor, hopes the Chancellor of France has courage and villany enough to assist him in enslaving us, as the French Chancellor has enslaved his own country! if you mind not me, depend upon it you will meet the indignant shade of Sidney in your moonlight walk by your cold bath, who will frown inspiration. You see what you can do, what Milton trusted to prose, what Pope had not principles elevated enough to do, and for doing what Gray's bards will bless you. In short you have seated yourself close to all three, and you must now remain in full display of your dignity. When Gray's life is finished, you are not permitted to write anything inferior to the Dispensary. Thank you for your admirable remark on Barillon's letter; I will communicate it to Mrs. Macaulay (without naming you) she will defend Sidney in her next volume — but he demands a higher pen.

I am extremely pleased with the easy unaffected simplicity of your MS.. nor have found any thing scarce I would wish added, much less retrenched — unless the paragraph on Lord Bute which I do not think quite clearly expressed, and yet perhaps too clearly, while you chuse to remain unknown for author of the Epistle. The paragraph I mean might lead to a

suspicion: might it not look a little too, as if Gray, at least his friends for him, had been disappointed? especially as he asked for the place, and accepted it afterwards from the Duke of Grafton? Since Gray (and I am sorry he did not) has left no marks of indignation against the present times, I do not know whether it were so well to mix politics with a life so unpolitical: but I only suggest this—you are sure I do not speak from disinclination to the censure, but from infinite regard both for him and you. The page and reflections on poor West's death are new, most touching, most exquisitely worded.

I send you Mr. Andrew Stuart's book; and as I had two given to me, I beg you will accept that I send. It will be a great curiosity, for after all his heroism, fear or nationality have preponderated, and it will not be published.

I can add nothing to your account of Gray's going abroad with me. It was my own thought and offer, and was chearfully accepted; thank you for inserting my alteration, as I survive, any softening would be unjust to the dead; and nobody can justify him so well as my confession and attestation. It must be believed that I was in the wrong, not he, when I allow it; in things of that nature, the survivor has the better chance of being justified: and for your sake, dear Sir, as well as his. I chuse you should do justice to your friend. I am sorry I had a fault towards him; it does not wound me to own it.

I return you Mr. Trollop's verses, of which many are

excellent, and yet I cannot help thinking the best were Gray's, not only as they appear in his writing, but as they are more nervous and less diffuse than the others; when we meet, why should not we select the best, and make a compleat poem?

Dr. Goldsmith has written a comedy — no, it is the lowest of all farces, it is not the subject I condemn, though very vulgar, but the execution. The drift tends to no moral, no edification of any kind — the situations however are well imagined, and make one laugh in spite of the grossness of the dialogue, the forced witticisms, and total improbability of the whole plan and conduct. But what disgusts me most, is that though the characters are very low, and aim at low humour, not one of them says a sentence that is natural or marks any character at all. It is set up in opposition to sentimental comedy, and is as bad as the worst of them. Garrick would not act it, but bought himself off by a poor prologue. I say nothing of the Home's Alonzo and Murphy's Alzuma, because as the latter is sense and poetry compared to the former, you cannot want an account of either.

Mr. Nicoll is returned, transported with Italy: I hope he will come hither with me next week, gothic ground may sober him a little from pictures and statues, which he will not meet with in his village, and which, I doubt, will at first be a little irksome. His friend Mr. Barrett stands for Dover, I suppose on the court-interest, for Wilkes has sent down a remonstrating candidate. I like the *Parliamentary right* in his City

remonstrance. I forgot to tell you too, that I believe the Scotch are heartily sick of their Dalrymplyan publication. It has reopened all the mouths of clamour; and the Heroic Epistle arrived in the critical minute to furnish clamour with quotations. You cannot imagine how I used it as fumigation. Whenever I was asked, have you read Sir J. Dalrymple? I replied, have *you* read the Heroic Epistle? Betty is in raptures on being immortalized; the Elephant and Ass are become constellations, and *he has stolen the Earl of Denbigh's handkerchief* is the proverb in fashion — good night.

Pope — Garth — Boileau — you may guess whether I am or not

your sincere admirer
HOR. WALPOLE.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, June 28, 1773.

Not that I have any thing to say, but if I do not write to say, when shall I have a minute's time? I have given myself two or three holidays, and must enjoy them by conversing with my friends. I am not going to India, nor have been at Portsmouth. It is not sure that I am not going to as unlikely a place, Newmarket. All Lord Orford's affairs are devolved upon me because nobody else will undertake the office. I am selling his horses, and buying off his matches. I live in town to hear of mortgages and annuities, and

do not wonder that Titus was called the delight of mankind, for he put *the Jews* to the sword. Mr. Manners, who was the son of Lord William, who was the son of Beelzebub, deserves to be crucified. He was so obliging the other day to make me a visit, and tell me he should seize the pictures at Houghton, I sent for a lawyer to exorcise him. My dear Sir, what vicissitudes have I seen in my family! I seem to live upon a chess-board; every other step is black or white. A nephew mad and ruined, a niece, a princess; Houghton, the envy of England — last week Mr. Vernon, the jockey, offered to vouchsafe to live in it, if he might have the care of the game: you do not think I believe that I need hear sermons. I have moralities enough at my elbow — The only shaft that pierces deep, is the apprehension of losing the tranquillity I had so seduously planned for the close of my life. To be connected with Courts or Inns of Courts is equally poison. To trifle here was my whole wish, my little castle was finished, I was out of Parliament, and Temperance had given me her honour, that being as unsubstantial as a sylph, I should be as immortal. I would as soon put my trust in Lady St. Huntingdon; I have been six months in purgatory with the gout, another's ambition has engrafted me upon Sandford's genealogical tree, and I must converse with stewards and money-changers in the Temple every term. Here is a Hieroglyphic tale with a witness.

You are fretting at being shut up in York, instead of sauntering and piping to your sheep in your own

grounds. I grieve for that as much as you, yet you have whole evenings to loll in your chair as you do in your print here, lay down that paper in your hand, and write me a letter upon it, I shall be transported to receive a line that is not upon business. Does *the life* increase? does it take up all your time? we have nothing new but what is as old as Paul's, the Voyages to the South Sea. The Admiralty have dragged the whole ocean, and caught nothing but the fry of ungrown islands, which had slipped through the meshes of the Spaniard's net. They fetched blood of a great whale called Terra Austrialis incognita, but saw nothing but its tail. However Lord Sandwich has given great ocean's King a taste for salt water, and we are to conquer the Atlantic, or let the sea into Richmond-garden, I forget which. Adieu; pray do not drop me, though I am got upon the *Turf*.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

York, June 28, 1773.

The strenuous idleness, which always possesses me when I am here (the phrase is classical though perhaps nonsensical) has prevented me, dear Sir, from answering your last most obliging letter sooner. In the meantime you are become a great royal unkle, or rather the great unkle of royalty, and all this while I have been deficient in point of congratulation.—However, as I sincerely believe the only part of the matter which pleases you is the Dutchess's safe reco-

very, I shall confine my congratulation to that point alone, which as her month is now about finished, I suppose will come at present with propriety, and I am not without hopes that you will in return send me a curious anecdote or two, relating to the part, which the supreme pattern of fraternal affection has acted on this trying occasion. I wish also to know the real state of his Royal Highnesses health.

I have printed the first section of the memoirs and now am preparing the second, which you may remember, is to conclude Mr. Gray's correspondence during his travels. I inclose two letters to Mr. West, written in French, which I think, in point of manner are so very French, that they deserve to be printed, but whether they are so, in point of language is a question which you must determine. I fancy if they are not accurate, a few corrections of your pen would make them so, or perhaps if one letter was made out of them both, that would be a sufficient specimen of his excellence with respect to writing in a foreign language, which when he ever attempted, was it either in Latin, French or Italian; he became as it were a native, and thought exactly in the national manner. 'Tis on this account that I wish to publish a specimen in each tongue, and have already given one in Latin in the first section. If you think as I do on this subject, I must beg you to revise the letters I now send, and to mark also in red ink what other passages, besides those which I have marked already, it would be right to omit. I shall stop the press till I am favoured with your answer.

This dull place affords me no news except that her Majesty's Zebra who according to the advertisement in our York Courant of this day, it seems was lately the property of Mr. Pinchy and purchased by him of one of her domestics (though as I rather suspect given to him for the valuable consideration of his friendship) died the 3rd day of April last at Long Billington near Newark.

This advertisement further adds that the "Pro-" prietor has caused her skin to be stuffed, and that "upon the whole the outward structure being so well "executed, she is as well if not better now than "when alive, as she was so vicious as not to suffer "any stranger to come near her, and the curious may "now have a close inspection — which could not "be obtained before. She is at present exhibited at "the Blue Boar in this city, with an Oriental tiger, a "magnanimous lyon, a miraculous porcupine, a beau-"tiful leopard, and a voracious panther, &c. &c." Pray do not you think the fate of this animal truly pitiable, who after having as the same advertisement says, "belonged to her Majesty full ten years," should not only be exposed to the close inspection of every stable boy in the kingdom, but *her* immoralities while alive thus severely stigmatised in a country newspaper. I should think this anecdote might furnish the author of the Heroic Epistle with a series of moral reflections which might end with the following pathetic couplet;

> Ah beauteous beast! thy cruel fate evinces
> How vain the ass that puts its trust in princes!

I am informed that Mr. Cambridge instigated by the great fame of the forementioned author, has awakened his muse (who you may remember fell asleep in the Dutchess of Norfolk's assembly-room fifteen years ago, and never wakened since) and has added forty lines to the Heroic Epistle. I am promised a sight of them, but have not yet had that happiness. For my own part I ought to employ myself in an Epithalamium, on the approaching nuptials in Hertford-Street, or rather in an elegy on the fate of Aston, whose sale is determined upon: because it is too near the ducal seat at Kiverton. I suspect that in the next reign the Irish will take place of the Scots in point of favoritism.

I saw a Scotchman lately who averred to me that there was great truth in the affair of Sir J. D's bribery, and that the matter was hushed up at the time, by Wheatly, now dead, who I know was Sir J's friend at college. I wonder that this thing, as well as his curious speech to Mr. Onslow is not fully sifted and authenticated, they would afford the best of all answers to his scandal. I hope to have the great pleasure of hearing from you very soon, and beg you will believe me to be, dear Sir,

most sincerely yours

W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, July 5, 1773.

Though it was inconvenient, it looks like sympathy, that we wrote to each other at the same time. I resume

my pen as yours requires an answer: mine contained nothing material.

The Duke of Gloucester has frequent returns of his asthma, but they are short. Dr. Jebbe is confident that there are no dangerous symptoms, still as there is a latent cause, for which he is not likely to be soon touched by either pretender, one must not be too sanguine. I hope you like *the Princess Sophia.* The history attending her birth is indeed curious, but fitter for a book than a letter. You must wait for it, dear Sir, till we meet, for as I told you in my last, I am too much occupied by another nephew, to have time for being the historian of the royal one. I am not *the Ass that puts its trust in Princes,* nor that believes that Mr. Cambridge can come within a thousand leagues of the Epistle. Indeed I should have thought him as little likely to attempt adopting that vein, as my Lord Bristol, who vows he would as soon read blasphemy.

I firmly believe the story of Sir J. D's bribery, it was palliated by the intercession of Charles Yorke, but Lord Rockingham would not let it be totally suppressed. Onslow certainly told the other anecdote; but when I questioned him about it lately, he owned he had told it, but that Sir John had spoken to him since and explained away a good deal of the strength,—you will judge whether satisfactorily or not. I now come to Gray's letters. The first I well remember: the second you may be sure I never saw before. I cannot say that either of them satisfy me, nor do I know whether they would do him honour; though very well consider-

ing how young he was in French; but readers are more apt to criticize than excuse. The language is not correct, nor elegant; many of the idioms are downright English, and what gives them a French air chiefly, is a fault; I mean the phrases, which betray the tone of the provinces, not of the capital. Take them away, and you will not I think, find the spirit French. If you print them, I have no objection to your inserting the passage you have marked for reprobation, and which alludes to me. You see how easily I had disgusted him; but my faults were very trifling, and I can bear their being known, and forgive his displeasure. I still think I was as much to blame as he was; and as the passage proves what I have told you, let it stand, if you publish the whole letter. I send it with some corrections most of which I am sure are necessary; but as I am a very imperfect Frenchman myself, a native of France I doubt would find several more, and deem the style very *baroque*. *Des ombres d'Ideès* may be Spanish, but I doubt the expression will be unintelligible to French ears. *Cela* is never *ca*, I believe. The beginning of the second letter is full of Anglicisms: I have endeavoured to make them a little more Academic, but you should not rely on my judgment: Madam du Deffand has told me, that I speak French worse than any Englishman she knows.

I have almost waded through Dr. Hawksworth's three volumes of the voyages to the South Sea. The entertaining matter would not fill half a volume; and at best is but an account of the fishermen on the coasts of forty islands.

I must conclude, that my letter may go by a private hand to town, and be delivered to Mr. Fraser time enough for to-morrow's post. I use this method for the safety of Gray's letters, not for any secrets contained in this. Had I more leisure, I could tell you nothing but melancholy stories of my nephew, who is again grown furious, and has made several attempts lately to destroy himself, which keeps me in unceasing anxiety. Adieu, dear Sir; you do not send me a line, or a couple of lines, with which I am not charmed.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

York, July 16, 1773.

I have followed your advice with respect to the two French letters and instead of printing either of them, have inserted one to his mother, which will preserve the chain of correspondence. I ought to apologise for giving you fresh trouble at present, by desiring your opinion of two others which I enclose, and I would do so did you not tell me, that in your present situation (which I sincerely lament) an employment of this kind may serve for relaxation, and therefore I will take the liberty to chat with you, as if there was not a nephew or a Houghton in existence. If I chat at an improper season, you may throw down my Letter here, and take it up again when you shall be at better leisure and spirits. The first of these letters from Mr. West, though I think myself that there is good humour in it, will perhaps appear too bizarre for the Public, but

it is Mr. Gray's Italian answer that, I wish chiefly to be considered, because, I suspect that the verses in it, Te Dea, &c, are his own, and as far as I understand them, very beautiful; what he says too at the beginning about the Venus of Medicis, occasioned a very pretty Latin elegy of West's, which he sent him in return, and which I cannot print, unless either an extract or a translation of this letter precedes it. Now I am far too unskilled in the language, either to extract or translate it, or judge of its purity, and this illiterate place affords me no person to consult. I hear you say "I have forgot my Italian if I ever had any," be it so, yet you can surely find out some proper person to review it, nay perhaps can find interest to lay it before the Cruscan or Tuscan eyes of Sig^{r}. Baretti, or some greater adept even than he; at all adventures I wish for a translation of it, if not an emendation of the original, and (in hopes that I shall obtain them either from you or by means of you soon) I shall leave a gap in the press till I receive you answer.

I have another favour also to beg of you. You must know that Mrs. Dealtry, the widow of our excellent physician lately dead, has requested me to direct the two Fishers here (who are very good statuaries) in designing a monument to be put in our cathedral. My idea is, a figure of Health, with her old insignia of the serpent and staff in one hand, and a wreath failing out of the other, leaning in a pensive posture over an urn on which is inscribed his name and age, and upon the pedestal, which supports the whole, I

think of writing the six following lines, if they meet with your approbation.

Here, leaning o'er the tomb, where Dealtry sleeps,
Ambrosial Health in sculptur'd anguish weeps;
Here drops her faded wreath "No more" she cries,
"Let sickening mortals, with beseeching eyes,
"Invoke my feeble power; it fail'd to save
"My own and nature's guardian from the grave."

I suspect they will be thought rather heathenish, I beg however you will give me your most impartial sentiments about them.

In like manner, and for the same purpose, I send you a proof of an etching, which my boy Charles has just done, from a drawing which I and a painter made together from remembrance and a shade of Mr. Gray. If you think the medallion air of the head does not hurt the likeness too much, I would adopt it for a frontispiece. N.B. When the plate is worked off in a London press, the etching will appear much finer.

I shall be happy to hear that you are more happy than you was in the situation when you favoured me with your two last letters, and beg you to believe that I sincerely sympathize with you, being with the truest esteem, dear Sir,

your faithful servant

W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, July 29, 1773.

Your letter, dear Sir, arrived here while I was at

Ampthill, which prevented my answering it as soon as I ought to have done. I do not know a soul in town at present that is acquainted with Baretti: but I expect to see Mr. Chute in a week, who lived seven years in Italy and is master of Italian. As far as I recollect that language, I cannot say I am at all pleased with the letter: it is made up of phrases and patches, and does not go off glibly at all — in short it seems to me totally unlike an Italian, and so very unlike Gray's sense, that I think it would discredit him as much as a boyish exercise could; surely you might mention his having spoken of the Venus of Medici in West, without producing the letter itself; and only as an introduction to the latter's verses. Indeed as Gray's fragments will not add to the perfection of his reputation, I should be averse to inserting any thing that might lower him to the level with others. He was not only great, but original. Forty young men that I have known, wrote French better than he did, and though few catch Italian so well, yet I would not publish the letter, as it has neither an Italian, nor an English understanding. You and I mean the same thing in different ways. You are for showing the universality of his talents; I, only the excellence of them, and there I think and feel, as he felt himself. Mr. Chute will tell me whether the verses are Gray's or not — at least he knows where to find Martinelli, who will do as well as Baretti.

I like the idea of West's letter, but not all the execution, which I think falls very short of what it might have been. As I loved and esteemed poor West very much too, I am glad you have condemned it.

Your design for the tomb, dear Sir, is as classic as I like those things should be, and the epitaph as Greek. You order me to object, and therefore I do, but only to the epithet *ambrosial*, which however proper to health, seems to clash with the sorrow in the end of the line. I do not believe I should have refined so much, if you had not invited me to be nice; so if you will retract the one, I will the other, as you may be sure I am pleased, when I have but a criticism so slight to make.

I shall go to Nuneham on Monday next for two or three days, and to Houghton not till the 20th of August: before which you will receive back the two letters.

As the Fishers are at York; I wish they were inclined to take casts of the kings in the screen before the choir, which struck me so much. I am persuaded they might sell them well. At least I should be glad to have exact drawings of Henry IV and Richard III, if they would do them reasonably. Henry's is one of the most remarkable and characteristic countenances I ever saw, and totally unlike the common pictures of him, which have all but one dubious original. Pray remember I do not desire James I, which ought to be changed, in the spirit it was put up, for every reigning King.

The etching of Gray has great resemblance, and I should approve it for the frontispiece, though with some corrections. The eye is too open and cheerful for his; and the eyebrow, towards the ear, rises too much from the end of the eyelid. The top of the head behind is too flat, and the dark shade from the ear to

the chin is hard, too black and should be softened off. In general there is more vivacity than was in his countenance; and yet I think it will be difficult now, to produce a more faithful likeness.

My poor nephew is now worse or better, according to the moon, all I mean is, periodically, for I have little faith in moons or physicians. These returns however renew my anxiety for his safety; and though every precaution is taken that can be, it is impossible not to be alarmed, as he has all the sullenness and cunning of people in that condition.

Have you got the Annual Register? you will like the article of Sweden, which is remarkably well done; and so is that of Poland.

Are not you escaping to your sensible house and agreeable garden? I have a pedestal making for the tub in which my cat was drowned: the first stanza of the ode is to be written on it, beginning thus: —

'Twas on *this* lofty vase's side, &c.

However as this and much of my collection is frail, I am printing the Catalogue — that is like so many other men, I am pretending to step an inch beyond the grave into endless futurity, and record porcelain on paper. Apropos to such trifles, has not a Dr. Berkenhout sent to you for lists of your works and anecdotes of your life? I am sure he ought, for he thought even of me. I sent him word that the only merit I was conscious of, was having saved and published some valuable works of others; and that whenever he should write the lives of Printers, I should have no repugnance to appear in the catalogue.

Mr. Adam has published the first number of his Architecture. In it is a magnificent gateway and screen for the duke of Northumberland at Sion, which I see erecting every time I pass. It is all lace and embroidery, and as croquant as his frames for tables; consequently most improper to be exposed in the high road to Brentford. From Kent's mahogany we are dwindled to Adam's filigree. Grandeur and simplicity are not yet in fashion. In his preface he seems to tax Wyat with stealing from him; but Wyat has employed the antique with more judgment, and the Pantheon is still the most beautiful edifice in England. What are the Adelphi buildings? warehouses laced down the seams, like a soldier's trull in a regimental old coat.

I will enliven the conclusion of a heavy letter with a riddle by George Selwyn, the only verses I believe he ever made, and marked with all his wit:—

> The first thing is that thing without which we hold
> No very good bargain can ever be sold.
> The next is a soft white prim delicate thing,
> Which a parson has got 'twixt his knees and his chin.
> Then what at the playhouse we all strive to get,
> Or else are content to go in the pit.
> Then all this together will make an odd mess
> Of something in something, — and that you must guess.

so you will; and therefore I need not tell you the subject, nay nor who writes this letter.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 3, 1773.

Does one break a promise, dear Sir, when one cannot perform it? I have not seen Mr. Chute yet, consequently could not show him the two Italian letters: he is still at the Vine, and I have been learning to moralize in the land of mortification. In one word I am just returned from Houghton, where I had an ample lecture on the vanity of sublunary grandeur. If I had not suspected myself of being too like Ananias and Sapphira, and of purloining a favourite miniature, I think I should have sold Strawberry the moment I came back, and laid the purchase money at the feet of the first methodist apostle I met. This is telling you the havoc and spoil that my poor wretched nephew and a gang of banditti have made on the palace and estates of my father. The pictures alone have escaped the devastation. Methinks I could write another sermon on them; it would be crowded with texts from the lamentations of Jeremiah. What can I say to you but woe, woe, woe? I know nothing; I see nobody but lawyers, stewards and jockeys. I have given up every occupation and amusement of my life, and think of nothing but saving my family, not that I have any prospect of doing so, but merely because it is less uncomfortable than totally to despair of re-establishing it. I know this is folly and visionary pride: I am sensible that I sacrifice the remains of an agreeable life to disquiet and melancholy and trouble, but I cannot help it:

the arrow is shot; it sticks in my breast, and I should not feel the pain of it the less for not trying to pluck it out: go and write a moral satire on me; I deserve it for I act with my eyes open.

You know Lord Lyttelton is dead; the papers say Mr. Garrick is to be the editor of his papers. I shall not be impatient to see the text or the comment, but truly I believe he left none. He was timid to write any thing that he would have been afraid to publish, and was equally in dread of present and future critics, which made his works so insipid that he had better not have written them at all. His son does not seem to have equal apprehensions of the world's censure. Though he was such a

Foe to the Dryads of his father's groves,

the shades of Hagley are safe from his axe; they are not liable to the fate of Houghton. When the forests of our old barons were nothing but dens of thieves, the law in its wisdom made them unalienable. Its wisdom now thinks it very fitting that they should be cut down to pay debts at Almack's and Newmarket. I was saying this to the lawyer I carried down with me. He answered: the law hates a perpetuity — not all perpetuities, said I; not those of lawsuits — well, I will have done for I find every paragraph will close in the same way.

By the way have I told you that I have been at Nuncham? no I did not, I was strangely disappointed at my arrival and thought it very ugly. The next morning totally changed my ideas; it is capable of being

made uncommonly beautiful. Lord Nuneham's garden is the quintessence of nosegays; I wonder some maccaroni does not offer ten thousand pounds for it — but indeed the flowers come in their natural season, and take care to bring their perfumes along with them. Do you know that the Muses have a little cabinet there? and a female votary who writes with great facility and genteelly. I was trusted with the secret, and mind I don't betray it. Adieu.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, Aston, Sep. 12, 1773.

Pray give yourself no concern about the two Italian letters. I have printed the section without them, and your judgment about them in your former letter was sufficient to determine me that I did right in rejecting them; I should be glad however to have them returned at any convenient opportunity. I am really sorry at the thoughts of your being so disagreeably employed; but I hope that self satisfaction which always does and must result from a consciousness of doing what is right, will support your spirits and alleviate your present uneasiness; to say more about the matter would make my letter as unwelcome as the visit of an attorney or a jockey, and therefore I'll change the subject.

I am very lately returned from a ramble of ten days with Mr. Stonhewer round the Westmoreland Lakes. We carried a journal of Mr. Gray's with us, and

therefore seemed to see them with his eyes, yet when I saw them with my own I was sometimes a little disappointed. The great devastations which have been made about Keswick with regard to wood, and the dry season which had taken the principal feature from its cascades, or at least reduced it to a scanty rill, took away more than half the beauties of the scene. And I am not yet so confirmed a pupil of Sir William Chambers, as to be pleased with the frightful and surprising only.

I wonder that you should ever, even for the first moment, be displeased with Nuneham. I am glad you were so soon reconciled to it, for I think it one of the most pleasing scenes I know. Your poetical news was indeed news to me. I hope the same muse that throws the oblation of its poesy before the shrine of your friendship does not inspire the verses you speak of. If it does, be assured I never shall have candour enough to call them either facile or genteel. This I know that if my Yorkshire curate was half so insipid, as your Swedish one, I would turn him off, and do all the duty of my parish myself.

I wish your former letter to York had come a month sooner, I would then have employed a person under my own eye, to have copied the features of Henry IV and Richard III as exact as possible. I will take care to have the drawings made during my next residence, till then that matter must sleep. As to casts they would certainly never answer in point of sale. And the love of antiquity must certainly have obfuscated your reason

when you thought so. The Fishers are of my opinion, but they do not express themselves either so pertly or pedantically upon your subject. To shew you that I have guest the riddle you sent me, I give you what I think a great emendation of the fifth and sixth lines. —

> What the hand of a lady (how prudish soe'er)
> Will give to a man if he presses her near.

But pray for sake of all clerical decency dont say I suggested this various reading. I have just seen the Adams's first number of Architecture and read their preface, was there ever such a brace of self puffing Scotch coxcombs, they almost deserve an Heroic Epistle, but I have scribbled out my paper and, therefore, must conclude myself, dear Sir,

most truly yours

W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

DEAR SIR, Strawberry Hill, Sept. 17, 1773.

I have been absent from home five days and found twelve letters: after reading them and answering five on business, it is relaxation, dear Sir, to write to you. I will say no more on my occupation: I wish there were such mere merit in it, as to deserve what you say to me.

I inclose the two letters: I kept them to show to Mr. Chute, and am just come from him; he who is a much better Cruscan than I am, dislikes the Italian

letter still more; says it is not tolerably pure and composed of scraps of poetry; that the lines beginning Te Dea, are certainly Gray's, they are so incorrect; and yet more poetic than Salvini's lines — I do not wonder — but what would he have been if a Tuscan? you have found by your journey into Westmoreland that his inspired eyes even,

Made those bleak rocks and barren mountains smile:

The Swedish curate certainly has not the same talent. With regard to the *friendship* of the dedication, I compounded for it in lieu of more pompous compliments — I might, had I so pleased, have been a patron of learning.

The drawings of the Kings at York will be time enough next year for any leisure I shall have to bestow on them. I give up my idea of casts, and any thought that implies an opinion of real curiosity or taste in the present age. The nymphs holding necklaces on the outside of a bridge for Sion in Adams's first number, is a specimen of our productions in Architecture, as the preface is of modesty and diffidence. The lottery for the Adelphi-buildings will I suppect, be an example of rather more address. What patronage of arts in the parliament, to vote the city's land to those brothers, and then sanctify the sale of the houses by a bubble!

I have so totally forgotten what the riddle was I sent you, that I do not know whether your solution with all its humour is right, you may judge with what rubbish my head is filled. — I have learned so many

new things of late, that I have lost my memory. I believe poor Lord Nuneham will return in the same situation, you who have all your faculties in perfection may remember when I see you, which I long for, that I tell you of the success I have had in a contest, nay, in a money-contest with a mitre — it will divert you, but is not proper for a letter. I know nothing of higher import, and must therefore bid you good night!

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, Nov. 19, 1773.

I know nothing of you; you have left me off. I know you are alive, for Lord Strafford has seen you twice. Yet it is plain I am not out of charity with you, for I have been to see Elfrida, don't think it was out of revenge, though it is wretchedly acted, and worse set to music. The virgins were so inarticulate, that I should have understood them as well if they had sung chorus's of Sophocles. Orgar had a broad Irish accent; I thought the first virgin, who is a lusty virago, called Miss Miller, would have knocked him down and I hoped she would. Edgar stared at his own crown, and seemed to fear it would tumble off. For Miss Catley, she looked so impudent and was so big with child, you would have imagined she had been singing the black joke, only that she would then have been more intelligible. Smith did not play Athelwold ill; Mrs. Hartley is made for the part if beauty and figure could suffice for what you write, but she has no one

symptom of genius. Still it was very affecting and does admirably for the stage under all these disadvantages. The tears came into my eyes, and streamed down the Duchess of Richmond's lovely cheeks. Mr. Garrick has been wondrously jealous of the King's going twice together to Covent Garden, and to lure him back, has crammed the town's maw with shows of the Portsmouth review and interlarded every play with the most fulsome loyalties. He has new-written the Fair Quaker of Deal, and made it ten times worse than it was originally, and all to the tune of Portsmouth and George for ever; not to mention a preface in which the Earl of Sandwich by name, is preferred to Drake, Blake and all the admirals that ever existed.

Dr. Hawksworth is dead, out of luck not to have died a twelvemonth ago.

Lady Holderness has narrowly escaped with her life; she fell on the top of the stairs at Sion, against the edge of a door, which cut such a gash on her temple, that they were forced to sew it up; it was within half an inch of her eye, which is black all round, but not hurt, and her knee was much bruised.

This good town affords no other news, and is desolate; not that I make you any apologies for being so brief. I have ten times more business than you, and millions of letters of business, and sure you might always find as much to say as I had now.

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TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, Aston, Nov. 23, 1773.

I was just going to make apologies to you for my late silence, when I received your last, and to tell you that I had sent up a copy by Mr. Stonhewer of the three first sections of the memoirs for your perusal as to the matter, and for that of another friend as to the exact metre and latinity of the Latin poems, that any page may be cancelled if necessary. I flatter myself that if you like what is sent, you will like the two following sections much better. I have only two letters to you yet uninserted, if you find more you will favour me with them. I think in one of your letters which I returned, there were some marginal notes on a part of his poem on Education and Government, I should wish to have these if you can find them, as soon as possible, and before you give me your opinion of these sections.

You are very good to give Elfrida so much countenance, yet I think I should hardly go to see her, even if old Macklin was to play Athelwold! if I did, it would be for the sake of a riot, which I always loved as the only remaining vestige of English liberty, except that of the press, about which they say there is to be a message to parliament. Pray is there any grounds for this report, I ask for a very particular reason. There are other folks besides Garrick that hope shortly to give the Portsmouth review due honour,

and pretend that they were the occasion of it. I long to see Garrick's preface. Mem: any pacquet how large soever, will be sent me from Fraser at Lord Suffolk's office. Mem: also, I do not want to see the play. — I remember in one of your letters that you told me the Earl of Bristol sayd he would sooner read blasphemy than a certain poem. Did this come to your hands in such a manner, that it might be ridiculed safely?

I had heard before I received yours, that Lady Holderness had broken her head, but I am yet to learn when Lord Carmarthen is to break her daughter's head, I wish it was fairly broken, though my poor living and this goodly estate are to pay for it. I know not how to fill up my letter, and therefore I will transcribe part of an Heroic postscript addressed to the publick on their favorable reception of, &c., * * * but you must promise to burn it instantly.

For now my Muse thy fame is fixt as fate.
Tremble ye fools I scorn, ye knaves I hate,
I know the full-fledg'd vigor of thy wings,
I know thy voice can pierce the ear of Kings.
Did China's monarch here in Brittain doze,*
And was like western Kings, a King of Prose,
Thy song could cure his Asiatic spleen,
And make him wish to see, and to be seen,
That solemn vein of irony † so fine,
Which, e'en Reviewers own, adorn each line,

* The present Emperor of China is a Poet; see Voltaire, and Sir W. Chambers. M.

† A fine vein of solemn irony through this piece. — Monthly Review. M.

Would make him soon against his greatness, sin,
Desert his sofa, mount his palanquin,
And post whene'er the Goddess led the way,
Perchance to proud Spithead's imperial bay; *
There should he see, as others may have seen,
That ships have anchors, and that seas are green,
Should own the tackling trim, the streamers fine,
With S—d—h prattle and with B—d—w dine,
And then sail back, amid the cannons roar,
As safe, as sage as when he left the shore.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

DEAR SIR, Arlington Street, Nov. 27, 1773.

Mr. Stonhewer has sent me, and I have read, your first part of Gray's life, which I was very sorry to part with so soon. Like every thing of yours, I like it ten times better upon reading it again: you have with most singular art displayed the talents of my two departed friends to the fullest advantage; and yet there is a simplicity in your manner, which, like the frame of a fine picture, seems a frame only, and yet is gold. I should say much more in praise, if, as I have told Mr. Stonhewer, I was not aware that I myself must be far more interested in the whole of the narrative, than any other living mortal, and therefore may suppose it will please the world still more than it will——; And yet if wit, parts, learning, taste, sense, friendship, information can strike or amuse mankind, must not

* The P. Review was two months after the publication of, &c., Facts are stubborn things. M.

this work have that effect? — and yet, though *me* it may affect far more strongly, self-love certainly has no share in my affection to many parts. Of my two friends and me, I only make a most indifferent figure. I do not mean with regard to parts or talents. I never one instant of my life had the superlative vanity of ranking myself with them. They not only possessed genius, which I have not, great learning which is to be acquired, and which I never acquired; but both Gray and West had abilities marvellously premature; what wretched boyish stuff would my contemporary letters to them appear, if they existed; and which they both were so good-natured as to destroy! — what unpoetic things were mine at that age, some of which unfortunately do exist, and which I yet could never surpass; but it is not in that light I consider my own position. We had not got to Calais before Gray was dissatisfied, for I was a boy, and he, though infinitely more a man, was not enough so to make allowances. Hence am I never mentioned once with kindness in his letters to West. This hurts me for him, as well as myself. For the oblique censures on my want of curiosity, I have nothing to say. The fact was true; my eyes were not purely classic; and though I am now a dull antiquary, my age then made me taste pleasures and diversions merely modern: I say this to you, and to you only, in confidence. I do not object to a syllable. I know how trifling, how useless, how blameable I have been, and submit to hear my faults, both because I have had faults, and because I hope I have corrected some of

them; and though Gray hints at my unwillingness to be told them, I can say truly that to the end of his life, he neither spared the reprimand nor mollified the terms, as you and others know, and I believe have felt.

These reflections naturally arose on reading his letters again, and arose in spite of the pleasure they gave me, for self will intrude, even where self is not so much concerned. I am sorry to find I disobliged Gray so very early. I am sorry for him that it so totally obliterated all my friendship for him; a remark the world probably, and I hope, will not make, but which it is natural for me, dear Sir, to say to you. I am so sincerely zealous that all possible honour should be done to my two friends, that I care not a straw for serving as a foil to them. And as confession of faults is the only amendment I can now make to the one disobliged, I am pleased with myself for having consented and for consenting as I do, to that public reparation. I thank you for having revived West and his alas! stifled genius, and for having extended Gray's reputation. If the world admires them both as much as they deserved, I shall enjoy their fame — if it does not, I shall comfort myself for standing so prodigiously below them, as I do even without comparison.

There are a few false printings I could have corrected, but of no consequence, as Grotto del Cane, for Grotta, and a few notes I could have added, but also of little consequence. Dodsley, who is printing Lord Chesterfield's letters, will hate you for this publication. I was asked to write a preface — *Sic notus Ulysses?*

I knew Ulysses too well. Besides, I have enough to burn without adding to the mass. Forgive me, if I differ with you, but I cannot think Gray's Latin poems inferior even to his English, at least as I am not a Roman. I wish too that in a note you had referred to West's ode on the Queen in Dodsley's miscellanies. Adieu! go on and prosper; my poor friends have an historian worthy of them, and who satisfies their and your friend

HOR. WALPOLE.

P. S. Since I wrote my letter which is not to go till to-morrow, I have received your letter, and most delightful lines — you are sure I think them so, and should if they were not yours. The subject prejudices me enough, without my affection for your writings. I cannot recollect now (for I lose my memory by having it over stuffed with business) who told me the story of the blasphemy, and I will never affirm to you any thing where I cannot quote my evidence. Perhaps I shall remember; the story however ought not to be lost, and may be reserved for even a twentieth edition; no I don't know whether there will be a twentieth. If what you tell me of a message be true, there will not be one. I had not heard it, but can easily believe it, and I could tell you exactly what it would cost, and will by word of mouth, if I ever see you again: for though I shall get some courtier to direct this, that it may pass safe, I cannot name my authority in writing. The fact is a secret yet, but will not be so long.

I will send for the life again to Mr. Stonhewer, since the impression is not perfect, and will add two or three corrections and perhaps a note or two, which you may reject if you please. I do not recollect the notes on Education, but will look for them, if I can get to Strawberry Hill next week, but I am demolished both in health and spirits by my poor nephew's affairs. I have neither strength nor understanding to go through them. I sometimes think of throwing them up and going to lay my bones in some free land, while there is such a country. This does not deserve to be so, but, *Qui vult tyrannizari tyrannizetur !*

I did not know the preface to the new Shakespeare was Garrick's, which I suppose is what you mean. He is as fit to write it, as a country curate to compose an excellent sermon from having preached one of Tillotson's. I will send you the volume, and you will return it when you have done with it.

I don't know when the young lady's head will be broken, they say next week. If her heart is not tough and Dutch, that may be broken too.

Saturday. I cannot possibly recollect who told me the story above, but I am certain it was related as an undoubted fact, nor does it sound at all like invention.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, Dec. 1, 1773.

I have again perused your sections very carefully, dear Sir, and have made some slight but necessary corrections, and have added a few still more inconsiderable notes. But there are two errors in point of dates of more consequence. They relate to Crebillon's works and the Churchyard, and I think you will alter them. Crebillon's Ecumoire was his first, and is perhaps his most known work, and is also the most indecent.

The Churchyard was, I am persuaded, posterior to West's death at least three or four years, as you will see by my note. At least I am sure that I had the twelve or more first lines from himself above three years after that period, and it was long before he finished it. As your work is to be a classic, I wish, therefore, that you would give me leave to see the rest before it is published. A dull but accurate commentator may be useful before publication, however contemptible afterwards; and I am so anxious for the fame of your book, that I wish you not to hurry it. It may have faults from precipitation, which it could have no other way.

I think you determined not to reprint the lines on Lord H[olland]. I hope it is now a resolution. He is in so deplorable a state, that they would aggravate the misery of his last hours, and you yourself would be censured. I do not of all things suspect you of want

of feeling, and know it is sufficient to give your heart a hint. As Gray too seems to have condemned all his own satirical works, that single one would not a high idea of his powers, though they were great in that walk, you and I know they were not inferior to his other styles; and I know, though perhaps you do not, that there never was but one pen as acute as his with more delicacy and superior irony.

I have read to day a pretty little Drama called Palladius and Irene, written by I know not whom. The beginning imitates Gray's runic fragments, the rest Shakespeare.

P. S. Lady Emily was married last Monday.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, Aston, Dec. 3, 1773.

This is not an answer to your last, it only comes to tell you (in order to stop sending the book) that what I want is the thing, whatever it is, in which Garrick compares Lord S. to Blake, Drake, &c., which you said in your former letter he had done. When I am helping your memory, let me also correct my own, which ought long ago to have told you that my friend Mr. Palgrave would think himself highly obliged by a copy of Grammont. I think he said you once gave him hopes of having one, however this be, you cannot bestow this favour better than on Palgrave, whose peculiar taste for writings of that kind, would make him infinitely

obliged to you for such a present. I mean to write a longer letter very soon, in the mean time, believe me dear Sir, most sincerely yours

W. MASON.

The story shall not be lost, I assure you. I was only afraid it had been said to yourself, but I find to my comfort, 'tis publici juris.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, Dec. 8, 1773.

I have been to Strawberry Hill, but cannot find the notes you mention on Education, and which I do not remember ever to have seen. By Mr. Fraser's assistance I send you four more of Gray's letters; — all I can select that are printable yet. I mean that would not be too obscure without many notes, or that contain criticisms on living authors, very just, but, therefore, offensive. Your book will have future editions enough, and then they may appear. I have added an epitaph on West, that he well merited, and nine of his letters to me, that you may use if you have room, reject if you please, or if you please, reserve.

The passage you desire to see, is in the preface to the new Fair Quaker of Deal, or, as for the puppet-show's sake, it is now called, the Fair Quaker of Portsmouth; take notice that you are not to suppose the corrections Garrick's, for they are dedicated to him, and

he, you know, never flatters himself. You will not find Drake and Blake and Raleigh *totidem verbis*, but what you will find is a new mode of reasoning, viz. that a man, not bred to the sea, may draw a marine character in perfection, because Lord S[andwich], who was not bred there neither, is an excellent First Lord of the Admiralty. Ergo, any body that is dead, might have written the ghost in Hamlet as well as Shakespeare. But here is the passage itself: "perhaps some may say that none but a sailor could have made these alterations; the answer to that is simple and apposite; that many dramatic writers have drawn strong characters of professional men, without serving an apprenticeship to the trade. At present we have a strong instance to the contrary in the E. of S. who, not bred a sailor, yet he governs the department in every minute sense of it, as well as any sailor that ever presided at the board!"

There is another little misfortune in this passage, which is, that nobody could have made these alterations but a man who had picked up some sea-phrases, and had not the least idea of character at all. There is a rough sailor and a delicate one, which, bating the terms, are Garrick's own Flash and Fribble over again: I leave you to judge who was the author.

Mr. Palgrave shall certainly have a Grammont, but I told you that I forgot everything, — my mind is a chaos, and my life a scene of drudgery. I must now quit you to write letters on farming and game. I have quarrels with country gentlemen about manors. Mr.

Granger teazes me to correct catalogues of prints, Dodsley for titles of Lord Chesterfield's works, and for a new edition of the Noble Authors; at least I may take the liberty to refuse myself. My printer is turned into a secretary, and I myself into a packhorse. I have elections of all sorts to manage, and might as well be an acting justice of the peace; I could not know less of the matter. All my own business stands still; all my own amusements are at an end. Yet I have made one discovery that gives me great consolation, for the sake of the species. I see one may be a man of business and yet an honest man. I have cheated nobody yet; indeed, by the help of a lawyer, I was on the point of doing an unjust thing. I spend my own money, and there is no probability of my ever being the better for all my trouble. My family will, but they shall have no reason to be ashamed of their benefactor; that is, my vanity hopes that when the sexton shows my grave in the parish church at Houghton, he will say, "here lies old Mr. Walpole, who was steward to my lord's great uncle." Well; that is better than having played the fool all the rest of one's life, as I have done.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, Dec. 14, 1773.

If your aphorism and the inference you draw from it did not seem to include a compliment, I would thank you, dear Sir, for your letter as the kindest possible,

for you reprove me like a friend, and nothing comes so welcome to me as to be told of my faults. The great business of my life being to mend as many, at least as much of them as I can. It is for this reason that though I have lived many useless years, yet I shall never think I have lived too long, since, if I do not flatter myself, I have fewer faults than I had. The consciousness of the number still humbles me, and causes the self dissatisfaction you have perceived; and which I hope you will no longer call self-love, but a great desire of meriting my own esteem. When I have acquired that, I will eagerly claim the friendship you are so good as to offer me. At present I am in the predicament of devout persons, who sincerely reject all praise, and sigh if they are commended.

With the same spirit of verity I allow the force of all your arguments, nay I go farther. Whatever I feel on my own account, I had rather be mortified than subtract a little from the honour your pen is conferring on my two dead friends. It would be base to rob their graves, to save my own vanity; and give me leave to say, that were I capable of asking it, you would be scarce less culpable in granting it. I communicated to you the reflections that naturally arose to my mind on reading your work — but I prefer truth and justice to myself, and for a selfish reason too; I mean, I had rather exercise those virtues, than have my vanity gratified; for I doubt whether even you and la Rochefoucault will not find that the love of virtue itself is founded on self-love — at least I can say

with the strictest veracity, that I never envied Gray or West their talents: I admired Gray's poetry as much as man ever did or will — I do wish that I had no more faults than they had! I must say too, that though I allow he loved me sincerely in the beginning of our friendship, I wish he had felt a little more patience for errors that were not meant to hurt him, and for that want of reflection in me which I regret as much as he condemned.— I have now done with that subject and will say no more on it. As I mean to be docile to your advice, whenever I have the pleasure of seeing you, we will read over the remainder of the letters together, and burn such as you disapprove of my keeping. Several of them I own I think worth preserving. They have infinite humour and wit, are the best proofs of his early and genuine parts before he arrived at that perfection at which he aimed, and which thence appear to me the more natural. I have kept them long with pleasure, may have little time to enjoy them longer, but hereafter they may appear with less impropriety than they would in your work, which is to establish the rank of his reputation. At least I admire them so very much, that I should trust to the good taste of some few (were they mine) and despise any criticisms.

The note on Crebillon is certainly of no importance, if you, like me in what I have just said, repose on taste and laugh at tasteless criticisms. Your account of the Elegy puts an end to my other criticism.

I have sent you in the manner, and by the hand you

pointed out, a few more of Gray's and West's letters, and the extract from the dedication you wot of. I hope all is arrived in safety — and you may swear, I pray as fervently for what you tell me. Adieu! I must answer three more letters, and in fact have nothing to tell you that deserves another paragraph.

Your much obliged

HOR. WALPOLE.

P. S. I have reason to think all letters to and from me, are opened since my relation to royalty. I know not what they will find that will answer but the blunders I make in letting farms.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, Aston, Jan. 4, 1774.

I have at last found out an opportunity of sending you safely, what I have for some time wished you to see. I shall now wish for your opinion of it, which you may send me too safely enough, if franked by some courtier, and directed to me at the Rev. Mr. Palgrave's, at Palgrave near Diss, Norfolk, for I am going to Cambridge to morrow, and shall from thence make him a visit. I have led so sedentary a life of late, that I think it necessary to jumble myself a little in a post-chaise before I go to York, where I shall be more sedentary still; if you know a dirtier and less considerable man than J * * * n whose name consists of three syllables, you will do me a favour to mention him, nay I will not stand with you for a syllable. I have laid

my scheme so that the thing will come out soon after the meeting of parliament, *nisi tu Docte dissentis.*

And now to answer your two last obliging letters. Your pacquet came to me just in good time to insert the letter on the Cat, and that on Polimetis; had I had Mr. West's letters sooner, they would have enriched my former sections; but at present they must rest. The epitaph on West I had before in Mr. Gray's hand. But I did not think proper to publish it on account of the author, and because, as you will find I have intentionally avoided mention of that person, except on one occasion, viz. your verses to him, about which verses I should have said more had they not been addressed to him. As I know you think very much the same concerning him that Mr. Gray did, I think you will believe my silence on his subject to be right.

As to your preserving Mr. Gray's letters I have only to say that I wish when you look them over again, you would only erase some passages, as for instance the infantine beginnings and conclusions of some of them, which are hardly fit for schoolboys, and yet will not be considered as written by a schoolboy, this was a liberty I once thought of taking myself, before I returned them.

I must now return to the thing you receive with this. You must know I have expunged a full third of it, about the liberty of the press. I mean to make that a separate piece for hereafter, if there be occasion. It destroyed the unity of this, and it was in that rejected part that I meant to take notice of Garrick's *admirals.* I mention this because you will perhaps wonder at the

omission, after what you writ concerning it; I think as it stands at present there is a proper mixture of the comic and serious; I do not expect it will please so much as the former, but I believe it will frighten some folks much more, and you'll own there is merit in doing that. However, as I said before, I shall depend entirely on your opinion as to publication, only give me your assent or dissent soon. I have many more letters to write, so must excuse myself, not only from writing longer but for the haste in which this is written, believe me to be, dear Sir,

yours most sincerely

W. MASON.

Pray remember Grammont for Mr. Palgrave.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Jan. 14, 1774.

DEAR SIR—whom I respect and admire more and more

Do not be surprised at my sending an express; the subject of your letter is of too much consequence to venture the answer by the post, and I do not mind the expense, when it is to show my zeal for you and *the cause*, and enables me to speak more plainly.

Never was a man less fit to give advice than I, who want it myself to the highest degree. I am in all lights in the most difficult and delicate situation upon earth, and have half lost my senses myself with fatigue, plagues, anxiety and dread, for my nephew, my family, and my character. In short, Lord Orford

is at once amazingly come to his senses, that is, to those he had or had not, before this time twelvemonth. The physicians, who must act by rules, declare they shall leave him this day month, because they dare not do otherwise by law. He will relapse, and perhaps kill himself, and I dare not stop them or him. My character is at stake and will suffer, whether I release or restrain him, — indeed I cannot restrain him. Judge of my situation without my tiring you with it! Judge too of my perplexity about what you have sent me. It is glorious, it is truth, has the noblest dignity of authoritative poetry, — must do good, — is wanted, — your country wants an avenger; you can do what a whole dirty nation will not do. Then what am I that would check your career a moment; yet hear me, Dr. —— delivered it to me with great marks of apprehension, and protested he knew not what it contained; that he was ordered to deliver it to a person who was to call for it: this struck me extremely; the person I conclude is Almon, whom I know and have found to be a rogue. He has already bragged, such a poem was coming out, and remember if he guesses the author, that you must manage him. Money will be offered him to tell, and he will take it and tell. Hence arises my first difficulty, and on your account, who I am sure would not for the world hurt Dr. —— whom Almon will name. My next difficulty is relating to myself. If Dr. ——, whom I cannot know, should name me, it would fall on one whom I am as tender of as myself, the Dutchess of Gloucester. Do not imagine my paltry

connection with royalty has changed me, — I despise it, lament it, — did my utmost to prevent it, and am hated both by those who are angry at it, and by *Him* whom I would not humour in it. I have braved the King's resentment, and am ill-used by the Duke, whom I would not encourage. It is not for him I fear, but for my poor niece; if her uncle could be proved to be privy to your piece, she would be still more undone than she is; nay, what could I say, if the Dr. should name me? I never could tell a lie without colouring, and I trust you know that my heart is set on acting uprightly; that I lament my faults, and study to correct myself; in short I would give the world the poem had gone to the press without coming to me in the manner it did. Do not imagine that a man who thinks and tells you he should colour if he lied, would betray you to save his life. I give you my honour that I have not to the dearest friend I have, named you for author of the other, nor would for this. I can answer for myself; I cannot for the Dr., and I dare not hazard the Dutchess. The result, therefore, of all is that I wish you could contrive to convey the poem to Almon without the intervention of Dr. ——, whom I may mistake, but who seemed uneasy; and as he did not venture to trust me with his knowledge of the contents, I am not in the wrong to be unwilling to trust. I will keep it till I get your answer; and shall enjoy reading it over and over. If it is more serious than the former, though it has infinite humour too, the majesty of the bard, equal to that of the Welsh bards, more than compensates. If it appears, as I

hope, I will write to you upon it, as a new poem, *in which I am much disappointed, and think it very unequal to the first.* (This is the common style of little critics, who I remember said just so of the three last parts of the Essay on Man). It will be hard if my letter is not opened at the post, when we wish it should. I am alone disappointed in not finding a hecatomb offered to Algernon Sidney, — that worst deed of the worst plan; for what is so criminal as a settled plot to depreciate virtue? I hope it is in the part on the press. I can give fifty additional motives and proofs to whet your anger. How I wish I could see you but for a day: I am chained here by the foot to a madman; but can I avoid wishing you could steal to town for a day. It might be a secret; I would come to you wherever you would appoint. At least acquit me of royalty or court-serving. I am not a tailor; I am not corrupted: I am hated at court and detest it. Keep my letter and print it in the Gazette either before or after my death, if I deceive you. Tell, show here, under my hand, that I exhorted you to publish both the Heroic Epistle and the postscript.

I glory in having done so, but I own I would not have you risk hurting Dr. ——, nor would I have my niece, who is ignorant and innocent, suffer for the participation of her uncle and your friend,

HOR. WALPOLE.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, Palgrave, Jan. 15, 1774.

You are under much greater apprehensions than you need to be on this subject. Hear a plain narrative. I sent up the pacquet to the Dr. by Mr. Varelst's servant, desired him, the Dr., to send it to you by some safe hand, and when he had received it back, to keep it till called for. The person who was to call for it was not by any means him whom you suspect, but the young man who received the ten golden guineas for the last. He cannot come to town these ten days, and when he does, I meant that he should negotiate this matter as he did the former. On his prudence and good management I can fully rely. As to the Dr. you may be quite as easy on his subject, and have nothing to do but to seal the pacquet up, and send it to him by your servant with charge to deliver it into his own hand. If after all you have any fears as being made privy to it, I give you full liberty to burn it instantly; and as there is no other copy extant, you may be assured it will perish compleatly. A[lmon] knows nothing about the matter yet, and was it now in his hands would make no use of it, till the beginning of a new month, for his own pecuniary reasons. And the apparent Marcellus will vanish as soon as the interview, is over, that is if I permit the interview, but this I shall not do till I hear from you again, which I wish to do at my return to Cambridge, whither I mean to go from hence on Monday the 24th, but for God's sake no more expresses. I have been at my wits end

to account for this to my present host, but have made a tolerable excuse: in your letter you need only say whether or no you permit me to publish those letters of Mr. Gray's, which you lately sent me, and I shall understand you. Was I to come to town in the present crisis, and be seen by any person, it would cause more suspicion than any thing else; indeed in my own opinion it would be the only dangerous step that could be taken in the whole transaction. I cannot write more at present except, that I am

extremely yours

W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

DEAR SIR, Jan. 21, 1774.

I have returned those letters of Gray to your friend, and earnestly beg as well as consent myself, that they should be printed. I should never forgive myself their being suppressed, as they will do him so much honour, and you have perfectly satisfied me that the lady in question cannot be affected by them, which was my whole concern. I beg you will excuse all the trouble I have given you, but my mind was in such violent agitation about my nephew, that every object came magnified to my eyes; and my dread of doing wrong, when it is so difficult to do right in the variety of relations in which I stand, made me fearful that even so innocent a thing as Gray's letters might hurt a person of whom I have no cause to complain, but I will say no more, than that I approve your reasons for omitting the epitaph on

West, and the Author of it, and that I wish it may not be too late to desire your silence on my epistle to the same person. Neither he nor my lines deserve notice in such a book. I no longer care about fame; I have done being an author, and above all, I should blush to have you stamp memory on any thing that is not worthy of it. It is a sad place to offer you, especially considering that it has been self-filled, but you rise in my opinion as fast as I sink in my own. The spot however will be dignified by gratitude, of which I never can feel enough, considering the sacrifice you so generously offered to make, and which nobody could make, but one that can do what he pleases. What a beast should I be, had I been capable of accepting it.

What can I tell you, I who for fifteen months have felt nothing but anguish in body and mind? before I was delivered from the gout in every limb, my nephew's madness fell on me; since that, the burthen of his affairs; and for these last three weeks an anxious suspense between his recovery and fears of his relapse, all now heightened by the probability that the physicians will quit him in three weeks more, when he must be at full liberty—to destroy himself if he pleases! I neither dare restrain him, nor can approve his release, and shall probably be to answer for consequences that I foresee, without having power to prevent! In short my mind is broken, and where I am free enough to own it, sunk. I have spirits enough left to conceal my serious thoughts from the world, but I own them to you my confessor. I have found I have sense enough to learn

many common things that I never believed myself capable of comprehending. I have found that better sense of acting as I ought, when it was necessary; for till this year I never really had any thing to do. I shall be rejoiced to resume that happy idleness. I know not whether it will be my lot; I think I should taste my old amusements again of books and virtù, yet with much less eagerness, for I feel that even absolute idleness would be an enjoyment, though till eight months ago I never knew what it was to be unemployed for a quarter of an hour. My ghostly father, tell me if you can from this confession, what I really think, for I protest I do not know; or if you will, laugh at me, and tell me any thing of yourself, a much more interesting subject. I know nothing, but that politics are dead, litterature obsolete, the stage lower than in the days of Mysteries, the actors as bad as the plays, the maccaronis as poor as the nabobs are rich, and nothing new upon earth, but coats and waistcoats; as for the women, they think almost as little of their petticoats as the men do. We are to have my Lord Chesterfield's works, and my Lord Lyttleton's works, which will not much reanimate the age, the *Saturnia regna*. Adieu, when Gray can spare you, pray let me have a line. Yours most entirely

H. W.

P. S. Gen. Græme has resigned, and old Hermes of Salisbury is made Secretary to the Queen; which I tell you, not as politics, which you do not care about, but as an event in a title page.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, Aston, Feb. 3, 1774.

I received, while at Cambridge, your permission to print those letters of Mr. Gray, and have taken my measures accordingly. I have nothing, therefore, to say at present on that subject, only to repeat my firm belief that they cannot do any harm to the person you mentioned.

I should, if I had found time for it, have expressed my true concern for your present critical and affecting situation, in my last letter: but I was much hurried and writ in company. Permit me now to tell you that I sincerely sympathize with you in all your chagrins.

I know by experience how impossible it is to do any effectual service in cases similar to that in which you have been of late so meritoriously employed. The poor man whom some years ago you so much befriended by printing his little Poems at your press, has been on my hands ever since, and by the contributions I then raised, added to a small living which Mr. Stonhewer procured for him, he and his wife and four children have been kept from starving; and this without much diminishing the little principal which I have kept in my hands; during all his time, he has been in such a state between madness and reason, that he is only capable at times of doing the common duties of his church, but never of taking care of his own affairs, and now he has taken it into his head to send his children

to York for education, which will of necessity run away presently with that money, which I intended to have employed in setting up his wife and eldest daughter in some decent trade, in case of his death, which, from his apparently bad constitution, was long ago to be expected. I mention this merely to shew how fruitless it is to hope to do real good in cases so deplorable as these. Yet I think at the same time it is our duty to act even without, and against hope in such cases; but for our own ease we should always avoid laying any preconcerted scheme for our conduct, and only act as circumstances arise, otherways we are sure of being disappointed.

You kindly prest me to come to London in your former letter, and you may assure yourself I would readily have done so, could I have done it either with convenience or propriety. But I am obliged to begin my residence at York next week, and to stay there till the middle of May. My only hope of seeing you, therefore, is at my Lord Strafford's in the summer, and to wait on you at Aston both going and coming. But if you are resolved not to set your face northwards, I will contrive if possible to come southwards. Provided always, that I can do this without being necessitated to pay my compliments to a certain person in your Strawberry neighbourhood, whose face (to tell you the truth) I wish never to see again; for he has of late behaved more shabbily than ever.

Soom after I am settled at York, I mean to send you that fine lyrical fragment of Mr. Gray's, which I have had the hardiesse to compleat by the addition

of two or three stanzas. I mean to print it among some additional notes at the end of his poems; if it serves (as I think it will) to elucidate his design, I shall not care how much it proves my lyrical inferiority; but more of this, when I send you the Ode, of which I mean to print a few copies, for the sake of obtaining your judgment and that of a few other friends, before I determine whether to insert it in the book or not. I shall hope to hear from you soon, and let me beg you to remember to direct to me at York, for you was always forgetful in points of this sort even when you had not so good or rather so bad a cause to be forgetful. I hope I need not say how cordially I wish your mind to be more at ease, nor with what sincerity I am, dear Sir,

your most obliged and faithful servant,

W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Feb. 14, 1734.

I am most impatient for your lyric section and the completion of the Ode. Nay, I am glad to have lost so much of school-boy and school-master, as to be charmed with the fragment, though Dr. Barnard frowns on it — pray remember, however, that when you have so much piety for Mr. Gray's remains, you are unpardonable in leaving your own works imperfect. I trust, as you will now enjoy your own garden in summer, and will have finished the life by your return from York, that you will perfect your Essay on Modern Gardening: *you*

have given a whole year to your friend and are in debt to the public.

My troubles are at an end, my nephew is as well as ever *He* was, and is gone into the country either to compleat his own ruin and his family's, or to relapse. I shall feel the former, I dread the latter — but I must decline the charge a second time. It half killed me, and would entirely have ruined my health. Indeed it has hurt me so much, that though my mind has recovered its tranquillity I cannot yet shake off the impressions and recall my spirits. Six months of gout and nine of stewardship and fears were too much for my time of life and want of strength. The villainy too that I have seen has shocked me; and memory predominates over cheerfulness. My inclination will certainly carry me this summer into Yorkshire, if dread of my biennial gout does not restrain me. Sometimes, I have a mind to go to a warmer climate; but either at Aston or at Strawberry will insist on our meeting before winter; what signifies a neighbour you do not wish to see? Are our enemies to deprive us of our best satisfaction, seeing our friends? I will presume to say you cannot have a warmer or more sincere one than myself, who never call myself so when I do not feel myself so, and who have few pleasures left but that of saying what I think. You are too wise and too good not to despise the dirtiness of fools, or to regret a man, who came to years of discretion, before he was past his childhood, and is superannuated before he is come to his understanding. He is decaying fast, and will soon exist but

in his epitaph, like those poor Knights of Windsor who are recorded on their gravestones for their loyalty to Charles the first.

The house of Lords is busy on the question of literary property, a question that lies between the integrity of Scotch authors and English booksellers. T'other house has got into a new scrape with the city and printers, which I suppose will end to the detriment of the press. The ministers have a much tougher business on their hands in which even their factotum the parliament may not be able to ensure success — I mean the rupture with America. If all the black slaves were in rebellion, I should have no doubt in chusing my side, but I scarce wish perfect freedom to merchants who are the bloodiest of all tyrants. I should think the souls of the Africans would sit heavy on the swords of the Americans.

We are still expecting the works of Lord Chesterfield and Lord Lyttelton — on my part with no manner of impatience; one was an ape of the French, the other of the Greeks, and I like neither secondhand pertness or solemnity. There is published a postscript to the Heroic Epistle certainly by the same author, as is evident by some charming lines, but inferior to the former as second parts are apt to be. The history of Charles Fox and Mrs. Grieve is come out too in rhyme, wretchedly done but minutely true. I think I have told you all I know and more than you will care whether you know or not. It is an insipid age. Even the Maccaronis degenerate; they have lost all their

money and credit, and ruin nobody but their taylors. Adieu,

yours most sincerely

H. W.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, York, March 3, 1774.

I could not with convenience get the Ode I mentioned to you printed before as I was not come to the place in the Memoirs where the fragment is inserted. When that sheet was worked off I gave the printer my additions to print a dozen copies before the roman types were broken up. One of these copies I send you, and if you and a few other friends think that what I have added may serve to elucidate his general idea, I shall reprint it and publish it not among his odes, no not even in the Memoirs; but only among some additional notes which I mean to put at the end of his poems, thrown in such a place, perhaps, I may escape censure for having had the vanity to make such an attempt.

We see nothing here but newspapers. If I send for a new pamphlet it is above a fortnight before it arrives. This was the case with the Heroic Postcript which you mentioned in your last. But you did not tell me that I had the honour of being placed in the same line with Dr. Goldsmith, if you had I should hardly have sent for it. However I am more contented with my company, than Garrick will be with his. I think much the same about

the piece itself as you do, and as there is certainly less comic humour in it than in the former, I should think neither its reputation nor its sale would be so great, but here I find from the last paper, ministry steps in as usual, and by the voice of Col. Onslow stamps the reputation it might want upon it, and hereby enhances Almon's profit. Were it not for this I'll be bound to say not three persons in York would have read it; now it will spread through the county.

You gave me in your last (expressed in a line and a half) all the sense that has or can be spoken on the subject of literary property. But much more may be said, and I hope you will say it on the result of the debate. I think Lord Mansfield has finessed the matter far beyond all his former finesses. His silence — the palinodia of my Lord Chancellor — all, all are equally admirable. I must insist on another paragraph from you on this interesting subject.

I heartily rejoice that your family concerns are at least actively at an end, passively your heart will never suffer them to be, and perhaps it ought not. But I beg and entreat that same heart not to be too solicitous in future, for the sake of itself and for the sake of its friends, amongst which number (as it lately permitted me to do) I have both the pleasure and the honour to rank, dear Sir,

your faithful servant

W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

DEAR SIR, Arlington Street, March 19, 1774.

I arrived here but four hours ago from Houghton, where I have been this fortnight with my nephew: I find your letter, your printed ode, and messages from Mr. Stonhewer, to whom I have not yet had an instant's time to send, nor have, but to say one syllable to you, as I approve your additions exceedingly, and would not delay saying so; that if my taste or judgment can have any weight, you may be determined to print what Gray might envy — I am fond of modesty even in the flower of authors, but not carried too far, as you do now, by degrading Gray to an Appendix, because you, though unworthy, will not sit by him in his Works. You have finished him as well as he himself, with all his love of polishing, could have done, and I think truly that yours have more harmony than some of his lines. I wonder at it, for I dislike the metre, which in the fourth line has a sudden sink, like a man with one leg shorter than the other — but I have not time for a word more, you shall have a longer letter in a post or two. Adieu,

yours most devotedly

HOR. WALPOLE.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

DEAR SIR, Strawberry Hill, March 23, 1774.

I wrote my last in a great hurry, and not much knowing what I said, being just lighted from my chaise after being a fortnight at Houghton with my nephew, where my head was filled with business, and my heart with anxiety and grief and twenty other passions, for (not to return to the subject) if he is recovered I doubt it will not be for a long season. He is neither temperate in his regimen nor conduct, and if I have chaced away seven evil spirits, as many are ready to enter. In short, the rest of my life, I find, and they will shorten it, is to be spent in contests with lawyers, the worst sort of lawyers, attornies, stewards, farmers mortgagees and toad-eaters. I do not advance and cannot retreat, I wished to live only for my friends and myself, I must now I find, live for my relations — or die for them; you are very kind in pitying, and advising me to consult my ease and health, but if you knew my whole story and it was not too long, even for a series of letters like Clarissa's, you would encourage me to proceed, for I flatter myself that my duty is the incentive to my conduct, and you, whose life is blameless, would I am sure advise your friend to sacrifice his happiness at last to his family, and to the memory of a father to whom he owes every thing, — but no more on this, though it has and does occupy my mind so much; that I am absolutely ignorant of the affairs of the world

and of all political and literary news, though the latter are the only comforts of the few moments I have to myself. I began Mr. Bryant's — what shall I call it — præ-existant History of the World, but had not time to finish the first volume. It put me in mind of Prior's Madam, who

To cut things came down to Adam.

There are two pages under the Radical Macar, that will divert you; an absolute account of Μακαριονες, though I dare to swear the good man never dreamt that he was writing the history of Almack's. I have just got Mr. Wharton's *Life* of Poetry, and it seems delightfully full of things I love, but not a minute to begin it; nor Campbell's long expected work on Commerce, which he told me twenty years ago should be the basis on which he meant to build his reputation. Ld. Lyttleton and Ld. Chesterfield are coming forth, and one must run them over in self-defence, still I say to you, *O quando ego te aspiciam*—yes, *Te*, both you and your Gray! I am impatient for the remainder, though I would not have it hurried. Mr. Stonhewer will have told you what I said on the print; but if he could make sense of it I shall wonder, for I was on both sides; for your print, as the more agreeable; for Wilson's picture as extremely like, though a likeness that shocks one; there are marks, evident marks of its being painted after Gray's death—I would not hang it up in my house for the world; I think I am now come to know my own mind, it is to have prints of both; from yours at the beginning to front his Juvenilia; from Wilson's,

at or towards the end, as the exact representation of him in his last years of life. The delay will not signify, as your look is a lasting one, no matter if it comes out in the middle of summer; it does not depend for its sale on a full London, it will be sent for into the country, and will always continue to be sold. Were I to write any thing that I could hope to have minded, I would publish in Summer. The first ball, duel, divorce, new prologue of Garrick, or debate in the House of Commons makes every thing forgotten in a minute in winter. Wedderburn's philippic on Franklyn, that was cried up to the skies, Chief Justice de Grey's on literary property, Ld. Sandwich's honorable behaviour to Miller the printer are already at the bottom of Lethe. Mademoiselle Heinel dances to morrow, and Wedderburn and Ld. Sandwich will catch their deaths if they wait in either of the temples of fame or infamy in expectation of admirers.

I know not a word more than I told you, or you have heard, of the affair of literary property. Ld. Mansfield's finesse as you call it, was christened by its true names, pitiful and paltry. Poor Mrs. Macaulay has written a very bad pamphlet on the subject. It marks dejection and sickness. In truth, any body that has principles must feel. Half of the King's opposition at least are hurrying to court. Sir William Meredith has ridden thither on a white stick; Colonel Barré on the necks of the Bostonians, his old friends; Mr. Burke, who has a tolerable stake in St. Vincents, seems to think it worth all the rest of America. Still,

I do not know how, an amazing bill of an amazing parent, has slipped through the ten thousand fingers of venality, and gives the Constitution some chance of rousing itself — I mean Grenville's bill for trying Elections. It passed as rapidly as if it had been for a repeal of Magna Charta, brought in by Mr. Cofferer Dyson. Well! it is one o' clock in the morning, and I must go to bed. I have passed one calm evening here alone, and have concluded it most agreeably by chatting with you. To morrow I must return into the bustle — but I carry every where with me the melancholy impression of my life's tranquillity being at an end. I see no prospect of peace for me, whether my nephew lives, dies, relapses, or remains as he is at present. I love to be occupied, but in my own way, unobserved and unconnected; my joy is to read or write what I please: not letters of business, accounts or applications; but good night; I have tired you and myself; my sole excuse is, if you will take it for one, that I had other things to do that I should have liked doing — but writing to you was the greatest pleasure, and according to my former habits I preferred what amused me best.

Yours ever

H. W.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, April 7, 1774.

Well, I have read Mr. Warton's book; and shall I tell

you what I think of it? I never saw so many entertaining particulars crowded together with so little entertainment and vivacity. The facts are overwhelmed by one another, as Johnstone's sense is by words; they are all equally strong. Mr. Warton has amassed all the parts and learning of four centuries, and all the impression that remains is, that those four ages had no parts or learning at all. There is not a gleam of poetry in their compositions between the Scalds and Chaucer: nay I question whether they took their metres for any thing more than rules for writing prose. In short, it may be the genealogy of versification with all its intermarriages and anecdotes of the family — but Gray's and your plan might still be executed. I am sorry Mr. Warton has contracted such an affection for his materials, that he seems almost to think that not only Pope, but Dryden himself have added few beauties to Chaucer. The republic of Parnassus has lost a member; Dr. Goldsmith is dead of a purple fever, and I think might have been saved if he had continued James's powder, which had had much effect, but his physician interposed. His numerous friends neglected him shamefully at last, as if they had no business with him when it was too serious to laugh. He had lately written epitaphs for them all, some of which hurt, and perhaps made them not sorry that his own was the first necessary. The poor soul had some times parts though never common sense.

I shall go to town to morrow and send for my Lord Chesterfield's letters, though I know all I wished to

see is suppressed. The Stanhopes applied to the chancellor for an injunction, and it was granted. At last his lordship permitted the publication on two conditions, that I own were reasonable, though I am sorry for them. The first, that the family might expunge what passages they pleased: the second, that Mrs. Stanhope should give up to them, without reserving a copy, Lord Chesterfield's portraits of his contemporaries, which he had lent to his son, and re-demanded of the widow, who gave them up, but had copied them. He burnt the originals himself, just before he died, on disgust with Sir John Dalrymple's book, a new crime in that sycophant's libel.

Campbell's book I have not looked into, and am told is very heavy — thus I have given you an account of my reading as my confessor in litterature. I know nothing else, and am happy to have time for thinking of my amusement.

Your old friend passes by here very often airing, and I am told looks ghastly and going. It has been so much expected, that his post of governor was destined, I hear, to Lord Bristol, and his Cinque ports I know were offered to Lord Germaine, for there seems to be a general comprehension, and nobody is to remain discontented, but those who see their reversions promised.

I dont ask about your own books, for I wish you to have a whole Summer of readers to yourself, as I told you in my last. I do inquire when I shall see you, and hope it will be in the Summer too, for in Autumn I expect the gout, my biennial tyrant. If he is as

severe as last time, he will be soon like the woman who killed her hen that laid golden eggs.

I forgot in my confession, to say that I have gone through half of Mr. Bryant's first volume, Lord John has read both, and likes them, and thinks there is a great deal made out. I got far enough to see that the Tower of Babel might have been finished, if you would allow the workmen to begin at the top and bottom at once — but this was not my reason for mentioning the book. If you have it or it is in your neighbourhood, pray in the radicals read the article of Macar. You will find that there was a happy people, a favourite name, who lived in an island and were called Μακαρωνες. Mr. Bryant is no joker, and I dare to swear never thought on our Maccaronies, when he was talking of Cushites and Ammonians. But I forgot that you are not as idle as I am, nor are bound to hear of every book I read. I can only say in excuse that when one is alone, one is apt to think of those one loves, and wishes to converse with them on common pursuits; is not it natural too, to wish to engage them in a little conversation? One tells them news, and wants them to care for it, in hopes of an answer. In short, you have won my affection, and must sometimes be troubled with it; but you are at liberty to treat it coolly or kindly, as you please. The mass will remain, though you should not encourage me to send you papers full of it at a time, Adieu.

9th. I was too late for the post on Thursday and have since got Lord Chesterfield's letters, which, with-

out being well entertained, I sat up reading last night till between one and two, and devoured above 140. To my great surprise they seem really written from the heart, not for the honour of his head, and in truth do no great honour to the last, nor show much feeling in the first, except in wishing for his son's fine gentlemanhood. He was sensible what a cub he had to work on, and whom two quartos of licking could not mould, for cub he remained to his death. The repetitions are endless and tiresome. The next volume, I see, promises more amusement, for in turning it over, I spied many political names. The more curious part of all is that one perceives by what infinite assiduity and attention his lordship's own great character was raised and supported, — and yet in all that great character what was there worth remembering but his bon mots; his few fugitive pieces that remain show his genteel turn for songs and his wit; — from politics he rather escaped well, than succeeded by them. In short, the diamond owed more to being brillianted and polished, and well set, than to any intrinsic worth or solidity.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

April 17, 1774.

You may say what you please, my dear Sir, but, yes you will be tired with the sight of my letters; and this perhaps will be still less welcome than any of its predecessors. They, poor souls, had no excuse for their gossiping. This is written more seriously, and from

good will prepense. In one word, my admiration has been ripened into warm friendship; and I do not see why friendship should be debarred of the privilege of telling one's friends his merits, when ill-nature may so cheaply borrow its mask to reprove him for his faults. Mr. Stonhewer brought me your section yesterday, before I received your letter — and do you know, I am exceedingly discontent with it? nqr for its faults, for there is not a single blemish — but for your honesty and rashness — what can provoke you to be so imprudent? or do you think I love you so little, as to enjoy your free spirit and not tell you what a nest of hornets — nay of hyænas you are incensing! I do beseech you to repress your indignation and cancel the papers in question. They will enrage, and you will have a life of warfare to lead to your dying day. Martyrdom itself might be delightful, if good could spring from the drops of blood. In the present case what benefit could arise? to yourself endless disquiet must be the consequence — well, but if I cannot touch your own intrepidity, I know I can stagger it, when your friend's memory is at stake. In Gray's own letters there is enough to offend, your notes added, will involve him in the quarrel, every silly story will be revived and his ashes will be disturbed to vex you. You know my idea was that your work should consecrate his name. To ensure that end, nothing should be blended with it that might make your work a book of party and controversy. By raising enemies to it, you will defeat in part your own benevolent purpose of a charitable fund,

when so numerous a host are banded against it, the sale will be clogged; reflect how many buyers you will exclude. At least as there is no loving kindness in my mercy, reserve the objectionable letters and your own notes to a future edition — nay it will be policy; if the book appears without its sting, Gray's character will be established, and unimpeached. Hereafter let them decry him if they can. I will dwell no longer on the subject; your letter tells me you are not in haste. One Mr. Stonhewer will write, will tell you that the *neighbouring inconvenience* will soon be removed one way, and my last that it is likely to be removed every way. I hope to see you at Strawberry Hill on the first dislodgment, and then we shall have time to squabble on the several articles I object to.

I have a few other difficulties, not of much consequence. I would omit every passage that hints at the cause of his removal from Peterhouse. Dont you or do you know that that and other idle stories were printed in an absurd book called Lexiphanes! I would be as wary as the church of Rome is before they canonize a saint. They wait till he has been dead an hundred years, that no old woman may exist to tell a tale of the frailtie of his youth, as a beldame did when Charles Borromée was to be sainted. "* * * * * * * * * * * * * * " Now I descend to verbal criticism. In p. 234, line 17 of the note, there is an *He* that is obscure. It means Gray, but by the construction refers to Akenside. "He would tire of it as soon as *he* did." The second *he*

should be *Mr. Gray.* I have slight faults to find when this is a big one, here is one still more diminutive: p. 239, for *d'ont* read dont. In p. 241, note 1. Gray was not mistaken. Before the Duc de Choiseul was disgraced, I was privy to many abject solicitations made by Voltaire to both the duke and duchess for leave to go to Paris,— but the duke did not think it worth his while to quarrel with the clergy and parliament upon his account. The moment the duke was out, Voltaire renewed the battery of flattery to the breast of the Duc d'Aiguillon, but as the first part of the transaction was communicated to me in confidence, I would not have it made public while the parties are living. His letters on that occasion are extant, and some time or other I suppose will appear.

In Algarotti's letter are two false printings, for *quan io porso* it should be *quanto io porrò,* or rather I believe *potro* and for *sottescri vam* read *sottoscrivermi.*

In defiance of my Lord Chesterfield, who holds it vulgar to laugh, and who says wit never makes one laugh, I declare I laughed aloud, though alone, when I read of the professor who died of turbot *and made a good end.* If this is not wit, I do not know what is. I am much more in doubt of his lordship's wit, since I have finished his letters. Half of the last volume has many pretty or prettyish ones, but sure no professor of wit ever sowed so little in two such ample fields! He seems to have been determined to indemnify himself for the falsehood and constraint of his whole life by owning what an impostor he had been. The work is

a most proper book of laws for the generation in which it is published, and has reduced the folly and worthlessness of the age to a regular system, in which nothing but the outside of the body and the superficies of the mind are considered. If a semblance of morality is recommended, it is to be painted and curled, and Hippolytus himself may keep a w——, provided she is married and a woman of quality. In short if the idea were not an old one, I would write on the back of this code, *The whole duty of man, adapted to the meanest capacities.*

If you like my telling you literary news, I will whenever I have any, I now have time to read and enjoy myself. Your observation on Mr. Warton's civility to Macpherson is very just. It is like protestants who in catholic countries bow to the sacrament, but do not kneel, and I do not doubt but both the priests and the Scot would burn the heretics if they could. I wish I could satisfy you about the parliament's intention on literary property, but as a bill is ordered in, you will know more of the event before you think of publishing. I scarce know more of the parliament's transactions than what I read in the papers. When I was at Rome, I never pryed into the actions of the Senatore di Roma. All I know of our senate is, that it is held in the Temple of Concord.

I enquire so little after their transactions, that I did not hear your name had been mentioned on that bill. I was told that a name of much less consequence, my own, was quoted by Mr. Wedderburne, I protest I did not ask

whether in approbation or dislike, or to what end. Apropos, I did hear that the other day Lord North declaiming against the opposition (I don't guess where he found them,) and saying they meant nothing but pensions and places, turned to his right, and there sat Cornwall blushing up to the eyes, turning short from a crimson conscience, on the right sat Wedderburne, pale as death; come, there is some merit in crimson.

You ask about answers to books: in good sooth I never read such matters, nor can tell who does but their authors. At least I never heard of the one you mention, nor disturb the departed. I must now say a word about that insignificant personage myself. I will not quarrel with you about what you say of my wit. Whether I have it, or have had it, I neither know nor care. It was none of my doing; and even if I had it, I am guilty of never having improved it, and of putting it to very trifling uses. Whatever it was, it is gone with my spirits, or passed off with my youth—which I bear the loss of too with patience, though a better possession. But I am seriouly hurt with those two words at the conclusion of your letter, *perfect respect*. Jesus! my dear Sir, to me, and from you, *perfect respect!* on what grounds, on what title?—what is there in me respectable? To have flung away so many advantages in so foolish a manner as I have done, is that respectable? to have done nothing in my life that is praiseworthy, not to have done as much good as I might; does this deserve respect from so good a man as you are? have I turned even my ruling passion, that preservative I call it, pride

to account? no — yet hear my sincere confession; I had rather be unknown, and have the pride of virtue, than be Shakespeare, which is all I can say of mortal wit. Nay I would rather accept that pride of virtue preferably to all earthly blessings, for its own comfortable insolence, though I were sure to be annihilated the moment I die; so far am I from thinking with the saint, that suffering virtue without a future reward, would of all conditions be the most miserable. There are none, or few real evils, but pain and guilt. The dignity of virtue makes every thing else a trifle, or very tolerable. Penury itself may flatter one, for it may be inflicted on a man for his virtue, by that paltry thing ermine and velvet a king. Pray, therefore, never respect me any more, till my virtues have made me a beggar. I am not melancholy, nor going to write *divine poems*. I have a more manly resolution, which is to mend myself as much as I can, and not let my age be as absurd as my youth. I want to respect myself, the person in the world whose approbation I desire most. The next title I aspire to, but not till that person is content with me, is that of being your

sincere friend

H. W.

P. S. You will be diverted to hear that a man who thought of nothing so much as the purity of his language, I mean Lord Chesterfield, says, "you and *me* shall not be well together," and this not once, but on

every such occasion. A friend of mine says, it was certainly to avoid that female inaccuracy of *they dont mind you and I,* and yet the latter is the least bad of the two. He says too, Ld. Chesterfield does, that for forty years of his life he never used a word without stopping a moment to think if he could not find a better. How agreeably he passed his time!

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, York, April 23, 1774.

I have cried *peccavi* in so many and long periphrases to Stonhewer and Dr. Hurd, that I have no more words left to express my contrition. I will, therefore, only say to you, that only have patience with me and I will cancel every syllable that can offend either Mr. Macpherson, or the most itchy highlander that ever came to a register office in search of *perfarment.* I now know and feel my own old English nothingness, and I never speak to my Scotch printer's Scotch devil without rising from my writing-desk and desiring him to be seated. But as I have said before, you must have patience with me, and having stopped the press you must suffer me to let it remain quiet for some months, before I open it again with my fifth section. In the meanwhile be assured I will not be idle, but will try to improve myself under the tuition of that great master of urbanity, my Lord Chesterfield, who being dead yet speaketh. I

will prove by my own example that his work which Mrs. Eugenia says will improve the youth, shall also improve the grown gentleman of these kingdoms. I have already under his tuition begun to treat my conscience as Jack and Martin, in the Tale of the Tub, did their old coats. The first pluck I gave was at the tag of my sincerity. I pulled hard and found the operation painful, nay it still hangs by two or three strong threads, but I hope in time to get fairly quit of it. I will next have a bout with my simplicity. This tag I know will occasion a great rent, but I will piece it up with any French frippery that comes to hand. When this is over, there will remain only a little religion and morality, which will drop of themselves; indeed they are so sowed to the first tag that if one comes fairly off, the two others will come with it, and so when all of them are detached I will devoutly consume them in one great sacrifice to the Graces. If I succeed in this operation, what have you not to expect from me, when I come in my regenerated state to visit you in your gothic castle of Strawberry. I on my part expect you will think of no personages of less *monde* fit to invite to our *partie quarrée* than Lord Carlisle and Mr. James. The former we would hope cannot offend me by laughing, even if the latter should be guilty of a bon mot. Take care however that I never see anything like *mauvais honte* for I die at the sight of it. Apropos to *mauvais honte*, pray does not the last page of your last letter smell terribly of its assafœtida? You seem ashamed that I should respect you and give this fine reason for it, that you do

not deserve respect. *Homme sauvage et vulgaire!* who ever had respect that deserved it, who ever was without it that did not deserve it? Was I writing in my old character I should say that a penitent of all other persons deserved the most respect, but penitence is not now in my catechism. Besides this I have another quarrel with you. You call me somewhere or other "so good a man." *Mon Dieu! Bon!* the phrase is barbarous, it is now never applied except in the feminine to a *governante.* In your next I suppose you will call me *ma bonne,* and make a Mademoiselle Kromm of me. These strictures my dear Sir, I hope will have a good effect upon you and make the style of your next a little more *decrotté;* in the meanwhile you must own that the friend of Madam du Deffand has lived to a fine time, when he sees himself the pupil (in point of *politesse*) of a Yorkshire parson. One word of serious and I have done. I am much more sorry to find you object to the manner I have treated Gray's removal to Pembroke, than for other matters which you think of more consequence. I had read Lexiphanes in its life time, it has been dead long, and I hardly think what I say will revive it. In a life so void of events, how is it possible to omit this, would not the omission make the world believe him more wrong than he really was. I think they would supply the omission from Lexiphanes, which would be the means of his resuscitation. But this and every thing else shall be altered to all your minds if you give me time for it, but indeed and indeed I am at present heartily tired of the work itself, and if you

knew the pains and the thought it has taken me to arrange the letters, in order to form that variety which I aimed at to make it read pleasantly, you would not wonder I was tired. I believe I have seldom written a sprightly, not but with a view of enlivening a less sprightly letter. All these, therefore, I can easily give up, for I would much sooner be guilty of publishing even a dull book, than by a lively one hurt any deserving friend, or create him an enemy. I have filled my paper so full that I have now no room for *respect* even if I durst use it.

W. M.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, June 12, 1774.

I recommend this with your two tracts on gardening to Mr. Fraser; you see I hasten to send you straw, that your brick-kiln may blaze. I shall send you soon Fitzpatrick's Town Eclogue, from my own furnace. The verses are charmingly smooth and easy, but I am much mistaken if you like them so well as Charles Fox's, as the former have certainly no novelty to recommend them, though there is one line about *squeazing* that is delightful.

The *manie des jardins Anglois* is very silly, and unpoetic even for French verse. T'other author has stolen all his ideas from us, and is ungrateful, is very French too, absurd and superficial, meaning to be philosophic;

has no idea of situation, but thinks it can be made; and in reality does not conceive helping or improving nature, but would make puppet-shows, for different ranks. He puts me in mind of one of his countrymen, who seeing some of ours hang up their hats on a row of pegs at a tavern, said, *on voit bien que c'est une nation qui pense.* I think they are ten times more foolish since they took to thinking.

By the waters of Babylon we sit down and weep, when we think of thee O America! Tribulation on Tribulation! since Gage's defeat, Eighteen, some say twenty eight thousand men have invested Boston; ten thousand more are on their march from Rhode Island. Two ships laden with provisions for him have been destroyed at New York, and all His Majesty's friends turned out thence. *Nous ne scavons plus à quel Saint nous vouer.* The city says there must be a pacification and a change of actors. Much good may it do those who will read their parts! Old *Garrick* perhaps will return to the stage, because he has no time to lose — however the manager's company talks of a troop of Hessians, &c.

I have got another noble author, Lord Mahon; he writes on the gold coin; if he can make gold as well as coin, he will be of great use to his father-in-law *Garrick*, and a very good prop to his administration. Your old Pollio is returned very lean and very deaf. Considering all things, methinks you might now hold a lodge, Mr. Mason, adieu.

P. S. Here is the Eclogue.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, July 19, 1774.

I send you by the Fraser Mercury the Itinerary of Mr. Gray with my manuscript additions. I don't know whether I have made them too long or too short, but as you are entirely at liberty to curtail or lengthen, or omit such as you disapprove, it does not signify what they are. They have indeed a fault I cannot mend, unless by time, and which yet I probably shall not mend. I mean they are not compleat, for there are some considerable places that I never saw, and I am grown too lazy since I can walk but little, to think of visiting them now.

I shall take care how I wish earnestly again for your coming southward, you gave me so little of your time and was so much in request, that I was only tantalized. I like your fixed stars that one can pore at when one pleases; but there is such a fuss with you comets, that even women and children must know all about them.

I know nothing but that we have deplorable weather; the sun like you has called but once at Strawberry. To make amends the cold has brought on the winter fruits so fast, that I had a codlin tart to day, and expect pears and apples ripe before peaches and nectarines. I wish we had never imported those southern delicacies, unless we had brought their climate over too. We should have been very happy with our hips and haws

and rainy days, and *called it luxury*. I cannot afford to have hot-houses, and glass-houses, and acres of tanners bark, as every trademan has at his villa, or at his mistress's villa. I kill my own strawberries and cream, and can aim no higher.

Do you know that it would be charity to send me something to print, or to tell me what I shall print. My press is at a dead stand, and I would fain employ it while I may, without permission of a Licencer for though it has always been as harmless as if it was under the canon of Sion Hill, it would be *vocal no more*, if it might only utter Dutch bibles or editions in *usum Delphini*. I know you have twenty things in your portefeuille. I will print as few copies as you please. I have no ambition of serving or amusing the public, and think of nothing but diverting myself and the few I love. What signifies taking the trouble to be put I dont know how soon, into an index *Expurgatorius* ! today is ours, let us enjoy it

yours ever

H. W.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Excuse me, but I cannot take your advice nor intend to print any more for the public; when I offer you my press it is most selfishly, and to possess your writings, for I would only print a few copies for your friends and mine. My last volume of the Anecdotes of Painting has long been finished, and as a debt shall some time

or other be published, but there I take my leave of Messieurs the readers. Let Dr. Johnson please this age with the fustian of his style and the meanness of his spirit! both are good and great enough for the taste and practice predominant. I think this country sinking fast into ruin; and when it is become an absolute monarchy and thence insignificant, I do not desire to be remembered by slaves and in a French province. I would not be Virgil or Boileau on such conditions; present amusement is all my object in reading, writing or printing. To gratify the first especially, I wish to see your poem finished.

> You, who e'er while the happy garden sung,
> Continue to ——————————— sing
> Recovered Paradise! ———

I am less impatient for Gray's life, being sure of seeing it, whether published or not: and as I conclude neither his letters nor Latin poems will be admired to the height they deserve, I am jealous of his fame, and do not like its being cast before swine. In short I wish his and your writings to meet with a fate that not many years ago was reckoned an ignominy, that they may be sent to the Colonies! for

> Arts and sciences will travel west

and

> The sad nine in Britain's evil hour

will embark for America.

I have been in Gloucestershire and can add a little to the catalogue, having seen Berkeley Castle, Thornbury Castle, and a charming small old house of the Abbots

of Gloucester. Indeed I could not enjoy the first, for the Earl was in it with all his Militia, and dispelled visions. To Wentworth Castle I shall certainly make no visit this year. If I went any journey it would be to Paris; but indolence persisting in her apprehensions of the gout, though I have had no symptoms of it for some time, will fix me here and hereabouts. I discover charms in idleness that I never had a notion of before, and perceive that age brings pleasures as well as takes away. There is serenity in having nothing to do, that is delicious: I am persuaded that little princes assumed the title of serene highness from that sensation.

Your assured friend

HORACE LE FAINEANT.

Given at our Castle of Nonsuch, Aug. 23, 1774.

Salute our trusty and well beloved The Palsgrave on our part.

Proposals for printing his own travels.
Duke of Newcastle's Journal going to Hanover.
History of the Devil, a Fragment.
Jemmy Twitcher's Courtship.
Inscription on the villa of a decayed Statesman.
Shakespeare to Mr. M's. Housekeeper.
Fragments of an act of parliament relating to monuments erected in Westminster Abbey.
The Mob Grammar.
Character of the Scotch.

N. B. This Catalogue of Gray's MS. Poetry is in Mason's writing at the end of Walpole's Letter. Ed.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, Aston, Aug. 9, 1774.

I ought to have thanked you much sooner for your notes on Mr. Gray's Itinerary, and your obliging letter. These additions will be extremely useful to the public, if ever the public deserves well enough of any person to reprint the catalogue in question, whether I shall take that pains is at present very doubtful, if I do, it will not be for the sake of that public, but only to get its money, to make a better use of it than it usually makes of it itself.

I have employed myself since I came down in endeavouring to supply the chasms in the sheets, where the objectionable notes &c. occurred, and I purpose to call at York the latter end of this week in my way to Scarborough, and shall leave the altered copy with Mr. Bedingfield that my printer and he may settle the text; when this is done, I mean on my return hither to proceed as speedily as I can to a conclusion, for I begin now to be very desirous of having it finished.

I paid a visit the other day at Wentworth Castle, where I found the noble owners very solitary, but to all appearance perfectly happy. They had been that morning at Wortley on a visit to Lady Bute, who is now there settling accounts with her stewards from morning to night. Lady Mary Coke is expected at Wentworth Castle next week, and they wish much for you *per trastullarsi coll istesta Principessa*, neither do

they think the excuse you make of waiting at Strawberry for a much less entertaining biennial companion, a very good or even a rational one, I must own I have the honour to think precisely as they do on this occasion, and I heartily hope you will be disappointed of your company even if you expect him or her, (for I know not of which sex the creature is of,) ever so impatiently. Lucian I know makes her female, and a goddess, but Lucian was a heathen, and wrote heathen Greek. You flatter me much by offering to open your Strawberry press for me, but I have nothing by me that in any sort merits such an honour. Scraps I have, and fragments dramatic and lyric in plenty, but nothing in any sort finished, or capable of being finished at present; why not return again to your Miscellaneous Antiquities? why should the neglect of the public prevent you from proceeding? there may come a public hereafter who will not neglect them, and if such a public never comes, your private amusement is still secured Try them if you please with the more modern parts of Mr. Gray's transcripts, my Lord Rochester's letters for instance; I'll lay my life they will devour them greedily. You know that neither I nor my curate perfectly relished Sir Thomas Wyat's eloquence, and yet my curate and I are neither of us the dupes of fashion, but speak what we think in all simplicity; treat us, therefore, with something more to our goût, and the world, even the great world will not disdain to follow our plain Yorkshire taste.

I believe Mr. Palgrave and I shall stay about a fort-

night or three weeks at Scarbro, in the meanwhile a letter directed to me here near Rotherham (I write it in capitals to impress it on your memory) will be forwarded to me. Mr Palgrave begs his best compliments, as to myself I need not say how truly and sincerely I am yours

W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 16, 1774.

What is the commonest thing in the world? — Lord! how can you be so dull as not to guess? why to be sure, to hunt for a thing forty times, and give it over, and then find it when you did not look for it, exactly where you had hunted forty times. This happened to me this very morning, and overjoyed I am; I suppose you don't guess what I have found; really Mr. Mason you great poets are so absent, and so unlike the rest of the world! Why what should I have found, but the thing in the world that was most worth finding? a hidden treasure — a hidden fig — no, Sir, nor the certificate of the Dss. of Kingston's first marriage, nor the lost books of Livy, nor the longitude, nor the philosopher's stone, nor all Charles Fox has lost. I tell you it is, what I have searched for a thousand times, and had rather have found than the longitude, if it was a thousand times longer — oh! you do guess, do you! I thought I never lost any thing in my life; I was sure

I had them, and so I had, and now am I not a good soul, to sit down and send you a copy incontinently? Don't be too much obliged to me neither. I am in a panic till there are more copies than mine, and as the post does not go till to-morrow, I am in terror lest the house should be burnt to night. I have a mind to go and bury a transcript in the field — but then if I should be burnt too! nobody would know where to look for it; well here it is! I think your decorum will not hold it proper to be printed in the life, nor would I have it. We will preserve copies, and the devil is in it, if sometime or other it don't find its way to the press. My copy is in his own handwriting, but who could doubt it; I know but one man upon earth who could have written it but Gray.*

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

I have not imitated your silence from irony, but convenience,—not from want of forgiveness, but of matter. In a time of general elections I have no more ideas than in Newmarket season, when everybody is talking of matches and bets. I do not know who has been distanced, or thrown or won a cup. I have only observed in the papers, that Lord John has been hard run, though he has got the plate; and as the race was

* *Note.* — Here follow the lines on Jemmy Twitcher (Lord Sandwich) printed under the title of the Candidate or the Cambridge Courtship. See Gray's Poems, Ed. Ald. p. 163.

at York, I suppose you was on the course. The new senate, they tell me, will be a curious assemblage of patricians and plebeians and knights — of the post. An *old cloaths man*, who, George Selwyn says, certainly stood for *Monmouth*, was a candidate, but unsuccessful. Bob, formerly a waiter at White's, was set up by my nephew for two boroughs and actually is returned for Castle Rising with Mr. Wedderburne;

Servus curru portatur eodem;

which I suppose will offend the Scottish Consul, as much as his countrymen resent an Irishman standing for Westminster, which the former reckon a borough of their own. For my part, waiter for waiter, I see little difference; they are all equally ready to cry, "coming, coming, Sir."

I have heard nothing but what you tell me of Johnson's detection, nor shall believe it till I see it; I have been likewise told that Macpherson is to publish the papers of James II, and detect Sir John Dalrymple. *Credat Judæus!* Is that house so divided against itself? I should have as soon believe Lord Mansfield had been to Paris for materials to prove the assassination plot. Really, Mr. Mason, you people who live in the country are strangely credulous! We are ignorant enough at Twickenham, *mais point jusqu'à ce point là.*

Your Life may as well have patience a little longer still. If it comes out in the midst of contested elections, flatter yourself as much as you will, no soul will read it. Alas, Sir! the history of a dead poet will make no

more impression now than the battle of Agincourt. If you can tell us any news of the assembly of the Colonies, we shall listen to you with avidity. — If you have any private intelligence that Boston is levelled to the ground, and sown with salt, better and better; but, dear Sir, Mr. Gray never set his foot in the Massachusets. He and Pindar might sing very pretty catches for ought we know, but nobody cares about such things now-a-days. You lose your time, indeed you do. The Belles Lettres were in fashion once, and so were fardingales. But this is a grave nation, and soon grows weary of trifles; for one while we were mad about commerce, but that bubble is over too: we have at last found out that fleets do more good by destroying trade than by protecting it; for if we have no trade, we are not vulnerable by an enemy. Spain enjoys Peru and Mexico by extirpating the inhabitants. She found that her natives migrated thither. What did she do? Laid waste the New World; and the Spaniards staid at home — to be sure, and we are going to be as wise. I wish you would turn your mind to these things as I do. There is some good in fathoming the arcana of government, but poetry and writing lives is an occupation only fit for a school-boy,—

Non sic fortis Etruria crevit,
Scilicet et rerum facta est pulchcrrima Roma.

No, she conquered the world and plundered her provinces, and then was blest with those demigods, Caligula, Domitian and Heliogabalus, who were always sent to heaven as soon as they were ripe for it. Adieu!

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, Oct. 2, 1774.

I may be ashamed of myself, and in sober sadness am horribly ashamed of myself, for having neglected to answer your two last letters. But I know not how it is, I grow as lazy, as lolloping as ——— a king, and as little inclined to keep on good terms with my correspondents, as he with his subjects. After making a simile so humiliating to myself, and feeling, as Mr. Ansty has it, *the conscious blush of self-condemning* — not *praise*, but *truth*, I hope you will acquit me without further apology.

A million of thanks to you for finding and sending what you have found and sent. The couplet which you wish me to alter, is one of those that can only be altered, not improved; the utmost one can hope is a passable alteration; however, I think with you (and always did) that the lines ought to be altered. I read somewhat nearer his idea than yours

* * * * * * *

* * * * * * * .

The rhymes here are not quite perfect, yet, in this sort of verse, I believe they are permissible. I remember when he repeated them to me (for I never before saw them in writing) that the epithet in the fourth line was *awkward* society, which I think better than *harmless*. I have been occupied of late in filling

up those chasms in the Memoirs which the cancelled pages required. I hope I have made them more innocent, but you shall see the whole when it is printed, and have as many more cancels as you please, whatever pains it costs me; for as to obstinacy and self-will, I flatter myself I am not similar to any great personage in the universe: 'tis the passive, not the active vices of majesty that I emulate. A relation of mine now abroad, has sent me an Italian translation of *Elfrida*, lately published at Florence by the Abbé Pillori. I am not sufficiently master of the language to know whether it be well or ill done, but it flatters me much to find it dedicated to Lord Mansfield's nephew, my Lord Stormont; it seems the Abbé is now about Caractacus; I hope he will dedicate it to Lord Mansfield himself. At last the fate of *Aston* is decided and my Nabob cousin is in the possession of the house, manor, &c., and last night the boys of the village having dragged a cart of coals from the pits, made a bonfire on the occasion. This goodly estate, which came into the D'Arcy family by marriage with a heiress of the Meltons, Temp. Prin. Eliz., now goes from it, because a broken Scot's quarter-master (Steward to the Duke of Leeds) would not suffer him to redeem it. Take physic Pomp! As I see nothing new in the book way for ages after publication, I beg you will give me some account of Dr. Johnson's Tour to Scotland, when it is published. You will perhaps wonder at my curiosity, but I have heard he has gone far in detecting Murphie's plagiaries with respect to Ossian and 'tis on this account only that I want to be

informed about it. Pray tell me how this horrid rainy season agrees with you, and whether you do not repent your not having gone into France with Lord Mansfield, merely for better weather. Believe me to be, dear Sir, both in rain and sunshine,

most faithfully yours

W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, Feb. 18, 1775.

Braganza was acted last night with prodigious success. The audience, the most impartial I ever saw, sat mute for two acts, and seemed determined to judge for themselves, and not be the dupes of the encomiums that had been so lavishly trumpeted. At the third act, they grew pleased, and interested: at the fourth they were cooled and deadened by two unnecessary scenes, but at the catastrophe in the fifth, they were transported; they clapped, shouted, huzzaed, cried bravo, and thundered out applause both at the end, and when given out again; yet the action was not worthy of the poet. Mrs. Yates shone in the dignified scenes, but had not variety enough; Smith, recalling Garrick in Richard III play'd the Vice-Roy with great spirit; but Reddish was pitiful and whining in the Duke; Aikin ridiculous in the first old conspirator, and the Friar totally insignificant, though engaged in the principal scene in the play where indeed he has too little to say.

The charming beauties of the poetry were not yet discovered, and the faults in the conduct may be easily mended. In short, I trust if this tragedy does not inspire better writers, that it will at least preserve the town from hearing with patience the stuff we have had for these fifty years. There was an excellent prologue written by Murphy, for my poor epilogue, though well delivered by Mrs. Yates, it appeared to me the flattest thing I ever heard, and the audience were very good in not groaning at it. I wish it could be spoken no more. The boxes are all taken for five and twenty nights, which are more than it can be acted this season. I went to the rehearsal with all the eagerness of eighteen, and was delighted to feel myself so young again. The actors diverted me with their dissatisfactions and complaints, and though I said all I could, committed some of what they called proprieties, that were very improper, as seating the duke and duchess on a high throne, in the second act, which made the spectators conclude that the revolution, as I knew they would, had happened. The scenes and dresses were well imagined, and the stage handsomely crowded. All this was wanted, for, from the defect in the subject, which calls for but two acts, several scenes languished. A little more knowledge of the stage in the author may prevent this in his future plays; for his poetry, it is beautiful to the highest degree, He has another fault, which is a want of quick dialogue, there is scarce ever a short speech, so that it will please more on reading, than in representation. I will send it to you the moment it is published.

There is nothing else new, nor do I hear of any thing coming. The war with America goes on briskly, that is as far as voting goes. A great majority in both houses is as brave as a mob ducking a pick-pocket. They flatter themselves they shall terrify the Colonies into submission in three months, and are amazed to hear that there is no such probability. They might as well have excommunicated them, and left it to the devil to put the sentence in execution.

Good night, and write to me; you are an idle creature, and I am very jealous of your harpisco-violin — it is your interleaved Linnæus.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, Feb. 28, 1775.

Thou recreant clerk — I do not mean for not replying to my last missive, but for changing thy mind, thou unhallowed Relapse, which I did not know when I wrote to thee last, or I would not have cockered thee up with a promise of Braganza, yet to show thee that I keep faith even with heretics, thou shalt have it when thou sayest how it may be sent. Thy sin is too foul to name, but thy conscience tells thee what I mean. 'Tis an Omission worse than any of the tribe of *Com*; and though posterity will be so selfish as to forgive it, there is not a Christian in being that ever can — oh yes, there are some that could, though I trust they cannot. I suppose you will be glad to hear that I have

got a codicil to my last gout. I had an inflammation in my face, and yesterday was blooded for it. It sunk in two hours, but baited and gave me a sore throat; this morning I waked lame, and cannot walk without a stick; so the whole is gouty, for that devil can act any distemper, like a fine Lady. It has hindered my going to Strawberry, whither the fine weather invited me. I wish we ever had such in summer.

The gates of Janus's temple are open'd and shut every other day; the porter has a sad time of it, and deserves a reversion for three lives. We are sending the Americans a sprig of olive, lapped up in an Act for a famine next year, for we are as merciful as we are stout. However, as the two Houses do not much reckon upon bonfires to come; each is treating itself with one at present, and have ordered a weekly paper and a pamphlet, each called the Crisis, to be burnt by the common hangman; and as contradictions now go hand in hand, each party has its victim. I have seen neither of the sacrifices, both they say are very stupid; the first is too free with his Majesty: the second compliments him with the sole right of Taxation; methinks all parliaments have a mortal aversion to the word *crisis*.

Since you left town, I have made another considerable purchase, for which I have been long hagling, the rest of the Digby miniatures. They had been divided into two shares. There is one superb piece of Sir Kenelm, his wife, and two sons, by Peter Oliver, after Vandyck, in the highest preservation, and certainly the capital

miniature of the world. I am not quite sure whether you did not see them two years ago; but why do I tell you any thing? you are twiddling your instrument of the composite order, and care no more than Orpheus whether any body but beasts listens to you. You now owe me two letters, and paid I will be, or I am

Your most obedient
humble servant

H. W.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

York, March 3, 1775.

Thirty years ago when I was turned twenty, I used to leave Cambridge for London whenever I had five guineas to spare, on what they called a scheme. My scheme was to dine every day at a chop-house behind St. Clement's at two, in order to be in the middle of the pit at four, there to remain with all the impatience of expectation till the curtain drew up; and this I continued to do daily while my money lasted, and with as much regularity as I at present go morning and afternoon to see the ancient maiden gentlewomen and decayed tradesmen of this famous city of York mumble their matins and their vespers. Now, Sir, if your former letter had been written thirty years before its present date, there is no question but I should have had both talents and spirit to answer it. The reading it is true put me, like Hezekiah's sundial, several degrees backward, and I felt myself adolescent. But the effect

was as I say, but momentary. The Minster bell tinkled me to prayers, and the effect vanished. However when you send me the tragedy itself, perhaps I shall be able to fill a page with closet criticism, for that power has not quite left me, and I distinguish it from theatrical criticism widely. Expect then to hear whether your favourite poet has observed his unities so well as a certain person who wrote the Mysterious Mother, and despised himself for having observed them; whether the Duchess of the one has as much of the *sibi constet* as the Countess of the other, and which has the best hand at preserving the costume when he delineates a friar. In the meantime I quit your former letter like the first head of one of my sermons, and proceed secondly to that which I received this morning. It begins thou recreant clerk! thou unhallowed relapse! thou heretic; and it begins well. I take away every one of the titles to myself, and bow beneath the scourge. There may come a time however, when I may wash my Ethiopianism white, but that time I never wish to live to see, because if I do, I must survive the majority of my friends. In the meanwhile here I sit, with my pen in my hand muzzled like a mastiff, wishing to bite, and yet unable even to bark. Convinced of this melancholy truth that no situation however independent, no desires or ambition however moderated, nay even (as I can truly say) annihilated, will authorize a man in these days to do what he thinks right. Unless he is as callous as a prime minister, and as unfeeling as his master. You, though you are the son of a prime

minister have not this callousness about you, and therefore from you I not only expect, but demand forgiveness.

As to the two Crisis's you mention I can only say I envy their fate, to be burnt by the common hangman is a thing devoutly to be wished. No fate except that of the pillory exceeds it. I would be content with even an unpensioned pillory, and yet this, stern fate denies me. However, that you may run no risk of either from receiving this letter, I shall prudently put it under a Secretary of State's cover.

I congratulate you on your new miniatures, though I know one day they will become court property, and dangle under the crimson-coloured shop glasses of our gracious Queen Charlotte. I never saw the piece you mentioned, though I burn to see it.

I condole with you on your gout, though I would almost bear its pain for you, if I could also possess your spirits. I hope it will be but a short fit, yet might not a little care of cold afterwards — I say no more, for I know it is in vain, and yet an under waistcoat — don't throw my letter in the fire till it has told you how much and how sincerely

I am yours
W. MASON.

Pray don't flirt at my musical instrument, it and fidget are my only comforts at present. Tell Lord Nuneham that I have finished the translation of Rousseau's Pigmalion, which he set me about three years ago, purely to

keep myself innocently employed, and out of harm's way. He shall have it for writing for; you I know will despise it. No matter, could an actor be found to act it, (but for this the soul of Pritchard, the voice of Mrs. Cibber, and the eye of Garrick must all unite in the form of a male figure, as young and beautiful as Mrs. Hartley) I say it would "pit, box and gallery" with Braganza.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

March 7, 1775.

If your contempt for your contemporaries extended to total silence, perhaps I should not disagree with you. There is dignity in indignation that refuses wholesome food to a stupid age, that is content with carrion. But why then publish Gray's life? Keep it back till you like to publish it with the original notes. Leave the Johnsons and Macphersons to worry one another for the diversion of a rabble, that desires and deserves no better sport.

Here is Braganza; I do not say that either the subject or conduct are interesting. The language is good, the poetry charming. Read any tragedy written within these thirty years, and then wonder that I was delighted to see even a cousin of Melpomene.

If you have *translated* Pygmalion, I shall be very glad to see him too; if you have only translated the music, I shall not be much the wiser, yet do not think my ignorance makes me supercilious. I admire all

your talents, though not a judge of all. Your writings; — your composite instrument, your drawings are dear to me according to my degrees of capacity; and when I seize every opportunity of drawing you into a correspondence, does not it say that I love your letters, and do my utmost to cultivate your friendship? Yes, I do; let all the prime ministers since my father, whom you name, say as much if they can! To my great sorrow we live at a distance, and when I wish to see you most, I have seen you least; yet Strawberry, where you scarce ever was in summer, is pleasant then. If you would at any time give me a week I should think it no trouble to fetch you. Time grows precious to me, and, therefore, I would employ it in the way most agreeable to me. Don't think me importunate, but it shall not be my own fault, if I do not please myself.

Yours most sincerely

H. W.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, April 3, 1775.

Well! your book is walking the town in mid day. How it is liked, I do not yet know. Were I to judge from my own feelings, I should say there never was so entertaining or interesting a work: that it is the most perfect model of biography; and must make Tacitus, and Agricola too, detest you. But as the world and simple I are not often of the same opinion, it will perhaps be thought very dull. If it is, all we can do, is to

appeal to that undutiful urchin, posterity, who commonly treats the judgment of its parents with contempt, though it has so profound a veneration for its most distant ancestors. As you have neither imitated the teeth-breaking diction of Johnson, nor coined slanders against the most virtuous names in story, like modern historians, you cannot expect to please the *reigning* taste. Few persons have had time, from their politics, diversions and gaming, to have read much of so large a volume, which they will keep for the summer, when they have full as much of nothing to do. Such as love poetry, or think themselves poets, will have hurried to the verses and been disappointed at not finding half a dozen more Elegies in a Churchyard. A few fine gentlemen will have read one or two of the shortest letters, which not being exactly such as they write themselves, they will dislike or copy next post; they who wish or intend to find fault with Gray, you, or even me, have, to be sure, skimmed over the whole, except the Latin for even spite, *non est tanti* —. The reviewers no doubt are already writing against you; not because they have read the whole, but because one's own name is always the first thing that strikes one in a book. The Scotch will be more deliberate, but not less angry; and if not less angry, not more merciful. Every Hume, however spelt, will I don't know what do; I should be sorry to be able to guess what. I have already been asked, why I did not prevent publication of the censure on David? The truth is (as you know) I never saw the whole together till now, and not that part;

and if I had, why ought I to have prevented it: Voltaire will cast an *imbelle* javelin *sine ictu* at Gray, for he loves to depreciate a *dead* great author, even when uprovoked, — even when he has commended him alive, or before he was so vain and so envious as he is now. The Rousseaurians will imagine that I interpolated the condemnation of his Eloise. In short, we shall have many sins laid to our charge, of which we are innocent; but what can the malicious say against the innocent, but what is not true? I am here in brunt to the storm; you sit serenely aloof and smile at its sputtering. So should I too, were I out of sight, but I hate to be stared at, and the object of whispers before my face. The Maccaronis will laugh out, for you say I am still in the fashionable world. — What! they will cry, as they read while their hair is curling, — that old soul; — for old and old-fashioned are synonimous in the vocabulary of mode, alas! Nobody is so sorry as I to be in the world's fashionable purlieus; still, in truth, all this is a joke and touches me little. I seem to myself a Stralbrug, who have lived past my time, and see almost my own life written before my face while I am yet upon earth, and as it were the only one of my contemporaries with whom I began the world. Well; in a month's time there will be little question of Gray, and less of me. America and feathers and masquerades will drive us into libraries, and there I am well content to live as an humble companion to Gray and you; and, thank my stars, not on the same shelf with the Macphersons and Dalrymples.

One omission I have found, at which I wonder; you do not mention Gray's study of physic, of which he had read much, and I doubt to his hurt. I had not seen till now that delightful encomium on Cambridge, when empty of its inhabitants. It is as good as anything in the book, and has that true humour, which I think equal to any of his excellencies. So has the apostrophe to Nicols "why, you monster, I shall never be dirty and amused as long as I live," but I will not quote any more, though I shall be reading it and reading it for the rest of my life.

But come, here is a task you must perform, and forthwith, and if you will not write to me, you shall *transcribble* to me, or I will *combustle* you. Send me incontinently all the proper names that are omitted. You know how I love writing marginal notes in my books, and there is not a word in or out of the book of which I will be ignorant. To save you trouble, here is a list of who is's. Page 152, fill up the asterisks; do. p. 174, do. 206, do. 232, 249, Peer who is it. 250, do.; the Lady of Quality? 251; the leader, 275; who the asterisk, 282; the Dr. who, 283; do. 284; the B's and E's, 288, where, whose is Stratton? 290 Lord?

You see my queries are not very numerous. If you do not answer them I will not tell you a syllable of what the *fashionable* say of your book, and I do not believe you have another correspondent amongst them. At present they are labouring through a very short work, more peculiarly addressed to them, at least to a res-

spectable part of them, the Jockey-Club, who to the latter's extreme surprise have been consulted on a point of honour by Mr. Fitzgerald, which however he has already decided himself with as little conscience as they could do in their most punctilious moments.

If you satisfy me, I will tell you the following *bon mot* of Foote, but be sure you don't read what follows till you have obeyed my commands. Foote was at Paris in October, when *Dr. Murray* was, who *admiring* or *dreading* his wit (for commentators dispute on the true reading) often invited him to dinner with his nephew. The embassador produced a very small bottle of Tokay, and dispensed it in very small glasses. The uncle to prove how precious every drop, said it was of the most exquisite growth, and very old. Foote taking up the diminutive glass, and examining it, replied, "it is very little of its age." Return me my story if you don't perform the conditions. I wish I could send you anybody's else life to write!

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, April 14, 1775.

What is the perfection of ingratitude? silence, what is the perfection of gratitude? silence. Obedience is better than sacrifice but obedience may be sacrifice too: judge.

We are both a little disappointed, are not we? how could we imagine that a quarto, that contained nothing but wit, humour, sentiment, truth, morality, re-

flection, genuine and original poetry, and the memoirs of two poets, of which one was a youth without guile or gall, and the other a good man through life, should interest the present age? especially when such ingredients were arranged with exquisite taste and judgment, and compose the most pleasing work, the standard of biography? no, my good friend, unless folks spare their praises because it would charm me to hear them, I have been forced to ask what is thought of Gray's life. Indeed nobody, without my avidity, could read it at once, and as it has been published a fortnight, it was impossible it could keep its station amidst the torrent of unlively follies that overflow each day. Well the best books were certainly never calculated for the plurality of readers; or, which is wondrous rare, some very good judge must be the dictator of the age. Still it is a comfort that works of genius are indestructible. They can neither be overlaid by the dullness of cotemporaries, nor escape the penetration of subsequent taste in all centuries, who, like the adepts in chymistry, transmit the secret to the brotherhood, and preserve the nostrum of the elixir for those who are worthy of it.

For me, though I recur once or twice a day to *the volume*, I have had time to read other things too, as a journey to Spain and Portugal, by a Mr. Twiss, who tells one nothing in vulgar aims at wit, but what Baretti and others have told, that those kingdoms contain nothing but muleteers and bad inns, and are as dull and depopulated as countries must be, where the inqui-

sition has reigned so long, and despotism reigns still. I have waded through Mr. Tyrrwhit's most tedious notes to the Canterbury Tales, for a true antiquary can still be zealous to settle the genuine shape of a lump of mineral from which Dryden extracted all the gold, and converted into beautiful medals. I was paid for my trouble by lighting on this couplet so applicable to her grace of Kingston,—

> I graunt it well, I have of non envie,
> Who maidenhed preferre to bigamie.

I have dipped into the second volume of Nugæ Antiquæ, and was lucky there too, finding a madrigal, not at all despicable, by the Viscount Rochford, Anne Boleyn's brother, of whom I had never been able to discover a single distich. For Macpherson, I stopped dead short in the first volume; never was such a heap of insignificant trash and lies — one instance shall suffice; in a letter from a spy to James II there is a blank for a name: a note without the smallest ground to build the conjecture on, says "probably the Earl of Devonshire," pretty well! yet not content, the honest gentleman says in the index, "The Earl of Devonshire is suspected of favouring the excluded family," can you suspect such a worthy person of forgery? could he forge Ossian? — I forgot in excuse for the town, to tell you that it is very busy about a history of two Perriau's and a Mrs. Rudd, who are likely to be hanged for misapplying their ingenuity. They drew bills, instead of rising from the pillory to pensions, by coining anecdotes against the author and friends of the revolu-

tion. As Mrs. Rudd has turned evidence; I suppose as soon as her husband is executed, she will have eight hundred a year to educate her children.

To return to Ossian; is not it evident that the Scots are of Irish parentage; hurt at the charge of having never produced a *poet*, they forge an Epic in *prose*.

Thank you for answering my queries. I have one more; who was the person Gray suspected of writing Colman's and Loyd's satire? I imagine the person mentioned in the next page. Mr. Chute says, posterity will not believe that such a book as yours could be written in this age, which has so totally lost sight of taste and common sense; pray, did you write it now, or when *some how or other* (as woman and the French say) you lived in the Augustan age.

Since I wrote this, I have gone farther into the Nugæ Antiquæ, and have found three invaluable letters with admirable pictures of the courts of that time. They show clearly what a sad dog Queen Bess was, and K. James what a silly bitch. There is a bon mot to the latter of Sir John Harringtons, translator of Ariosto, who had a great deal of wit. The son of David *did much presse for my opinion touchinge the power Satane in matter of witchcraft, and askede me with much gravitie if I did truelie understande why the devil did worke more with anciente women than others. I did not refraine from a scurvey jeste and even saide (notwithstandinge to whom it was saide) that we were taughte hereof in scripture, where it is told that the devil walketh in dry places.* Was it possible to make a better

answer to such a foolish question? Is not this worthy of being hung up as a companion to Foote's? bad as the ages we wot of, they furnish bon-mots at least.

Lord Nuneham has just been here, and says every body he has heard speak of it likes your book; that does not content me; they must say as Mr. Chute and I do, that we will read it for the rest of our lives. Adieu.—

your constant reader

H. W.

P. S. I forgot to put my letter into the post on Saturday.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, May 7, 1775.

Of all the birds in the air, I like a Freemason best, and next a Physician that gives one pills to purge melancholy. I am content to be sick, when my medicines are palatable. I remember the first words of a letter I wrote to you into Suffolk, and if you do too repeat them if possible with exaggeration.

You are the idlest of beings, and never set pen to paper, or I am an indefatigable correspondent, and plague you with my letters. I cannot help it. Not that I have any thing to say, or any reason for not waiting to hear from you. The reviews do not know yet what to say to your book, and so have not mentioned it; probably they are afraid of stumbling over

the Œolian harp again, and are weighing every word they write in a pair of Lexicon-scales. Lord Nuneham, who maintained to me at first that every body was charmed with your work, does own now that some folks begin to carp at it, had cause to dislike it, have had time to whisper their prejudices, no matter. Its merit does not depend on the competence of the present Age, you have fixed the method of biography, and whoever will write a life well must imitate you.

You have done another service that you are not aware of. I, who simpleton as I was, loved to be an Author, am so ashamed of my own stuff, and so convinced that nobody but you and Gray could write, have taken shame to myself, and forsworn the press; yet as as I cannot be idle, it is impossible. I have invented a new and very harmless way of *making books*, which diverts me as well, and brings me to no disgrace. I have just made a *new book*, which costs me only money, which I dont value, and time which I love to employ. It is a volume of etchings by *noble authors*. They are bound in robes of crimson and gold; the titles are printed at my own press, and the pasting is *by my own hand*. What I shall *compose* next I do not know. As you too seem to have given over writing, I wish you would draw for me, or etch, but with your variety of talents, perhaps you are making another match between two musical instruments. Is Mynheer Drum contracted with Signora Flageolet? or are you contriving how to make one mouth blow a trumpet, and sing at the same time? Mr. Bentley was always inventing new dishes by

compounding heterogeneous ingredients and called it cultivating the materia Edica, for you genius's hate the beaten road. He never would draw with common colours, or Indian ink, but being purely indolent too, always dipped his brush in the first thing he met, no matter whether the ashes, or the oil and vinegar, or all together, and ten to one but he tasted too, whether they would not make a good sauce, for cleanliness was not one of his delicacies.

I have been at all the exhibitions, and do not find that we are got an inch nearer Raphael than we were. Sir Joshua has indeed produced the best portrait he ever painted, that of the primate of Ireland, whom age has softened into a beauty: all the painters are begging to draw him, as they did from Reynolds's beggar-man. My brother has given me the view of Gray's tomb and churchyard, very prettily done, and inspired by Gray's own melancholy. I have hung it here in my favourite blue room, as a companion to Madame de Sevigny's hotel de Carnavalet, and call them my Penseroso and Allegro. Sir Edward was disappointed at your not revisiting his pentachord, for you inventors are jealous gods; but I assured him you had left town in a very few days after you were with him.

I am to dine on Monday at the hotel d'Harcourt. The town says the father's kingdom is soon to be invaded by the Spaniards; but the ministers, who certainly ought to know best, swear it is not true, so to be sure it is not.

I forgot to tell you that our friend Mrs. D. is one of

the warmest admirers of Gray's life; but then she is equally charmed with Mrs. Chapone's writings, and thinks they will go a great way towards making the Bible fashionable. She lent them to me, but alas! they could not have so much effect on me, had I wanted it, for I could not read the Madam's works themselves.

Have you had your summer, as we have? the fine ladies did not dare to ride on the causeway from Wednesday was sen'night till last Friday, for fear of being tanned. We are now relapsed to fires. Adieu,

yours most devotedly

H. W.

P. S. I like the hotel d'Harcourt it has *grand air* and a kind of Louis XIV old fashionhood that pleases me. There is a large garden and new *parterre*, and we want some *treillage* if the Irish Exchequer would afford it. Lord N. says, Oxford pouts at you as well as Cambridge. Lord Lyttelton does not admire. Mr. Palgrave, who was here this morning, says all the world admires, which is more than I demand. Pray, because you have written *the book*, do you never design to write any thing else? Is the English garden to be a fragment, and do you expect that any body should finish it and write your life, as well as you have done both for Gray?

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, Aston, May 18, 1775.

I am at last released from my York residence and

am returned from a disagreeable journey to Hull, on landed business of which I made nothing. I sit down quietly now for the first moment at Aston near Rotherham (pray remember that) and apply myself to the answering two of your letters, which before I could not possibly do, so pray forgive me, for I assure you I have behav'd worse to the delegates of the press of the University of Oxford, and a Mr. Falconer, (the, is to be, editor of Strabo) who want me to transcribe all Mr. Gray's Geographical Lucubrations, which as near as I can compute would make a book half as large as the Memoirs.

The person you inquire after as the person Gray suspected of writing Coleman's satire, is neither more nor less than the lively and spirituel Mr. Potenger, and as such pray book him.

What you say about my Memoirs does not flatter me half so much as what you say about my pills. I think in time I shall rival Dr. Hill with his tincture of Splenwort, 'tis pity however that my medicine is not vendible, do you think his Majesty would grant me a patent for it?

You say the University of Oxford pouts at me, I know not for why, but in revenge I'll tell you a story about them, which I think you cannot have heard. Last year a young Irish gentleman, Mr. Burgh, who has for some time lived at York, writ a book, called a scriptural confutation of Mr. Lindsey's apology, defending the doctrine of the Trinity in a new and (as we orthodox divines say) masterly manner. To the second edition

he set his name, and the University of Oxford met to consider of the propriety of giving him an honorary degree of Master of Arts; after much debate the intention was put off, *sine die*, at the very meeting when they gave Dr. Johnson a degree of Doctor of Laws. They said he had not laid sufficient stress on natural religion, but the true reason was that he had in a note abused David Hume, and in a dedication to Edmund Burke, doubted a little whether the royal fountain of honor was much purer than ditch-water. I wish you would look into this dedication, and also page 197 of his second edition, I think you would be pleased—*qu reste* —I can only say that had he writ on any other subject, you would also have been more pleased; for he is a young man of the quickest parts and most general knowledge I ever met with. He is of the Irish house of Commons, brother-in-law to Mr. Hussey, and one of us *au merveil.* But is it not curious that, on a doctrinal point in which the Oxonians in particular so much interest themselves, they will not suffer a man to defend their cause, who has the misfortune to be a Whig. I take shame to myself for not having waited on Sir Edward Walpole before I left town, and am much obliged to you for having told a civil lye upon the occasion. But don't go to flirt at our Pentachords and our Cœlestinettes, mind your noble etchings and your print shearings, and suffer us as well as yourself to ride our own hobby horses quietly and discreetly.

I am now in the very act of making an electrical machine by the help of our village wheelwright. Go to!

If I chuse to amuse myself with electrifying mice, instead of writing second books of English gardens, who shall control me? I mean to write to Lord Nuncham soon to get me from France, Watelet's Essay on gardening, and *M. Chabanon sur la manie des jardins Anglois.* Perhaps you will deign to assist me in procuring me these two brochures, the sillier they are I shall like them the better. Believe me, dear Sir,

most sincerely yours

W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

May 27, 1775.

To Mrs. Crewe,
By the Honble. Charles Fox.

Where the loveliest expression to feature is join'd,
By Nature's most delicate pencil design'd,
Where blushes unbidden and smiles without art,
Speak the sweetness and feeling that dwell in the heart;
Where in manners enchanting no blemish we trace,
But the soul keeps the promise we had from the face,
Sure philosophy, reason and coldness must prove
Defences unequal to shield us from love.
Then tell me, mysterious enchanter, O tell
By what wonderful art or by what magic spell,
My heart is so fenced, that for once I am wise
And gaze without madness on Amoret's eyes:
That my wishes which never were bounded before,
Are here bounded by friendship and ask for no more.
Is it reason? No, that my whole life will belye,
For who so at variance as reason and I.
Is't ambition that fills up each chink of my heart,
Nor allows to one softer sensation a part?

Ah! no, for in this all the world must agree
That one folly was never sufficient for me.
Is my mind on distress so intensely employed?
Or by pleasure relaxed or variety cloy'd?
For alike in this only enjoyment and pain
Both slacken the springs of the nerves which they strain,
That I've felt each reverse that from fortune can flow,
That I've tasted each bliss which the happiest know,
Has still been the whimsical fate of my life,
Where anguish and joy have been ever at strife.
But tho' versed in th' extremes both of pleasure and pain
I am still but too ready to feel them again.
If then for this once in my life I am free,
And escape from a snare might catch wiser than me;
'Tis that beauty alone but imperfectly charms,
For tho' brightness may dazzle, 'tis kindness that warms.
As on suns in the winter with pleasure we gaze,
But feel not their force, tho' their splendour we praise;
So beauty our just admiration may claim,
But love and love only our hearts can enflame.

As I design to be very temperate in writing to you, you would not receive so sudden a return to yours, were it not to send you the foregoing verses, which though current, are not yet got into the papers or magazines. I think you will like the ease and frankness of the lines, though they are not poetic; in that light and as characteristic, they are pretty original, so they are for being love-verses without love, the author's reason for not having which, is the worst part, and if poetry was peremptory logic, the inference would be that you must be in love with a woman before you can desire her: at least she must be in love with you, which I take to be seldom the case.

I am to have a longer copy of verses by Fitzpatrick, which I expect to like much, since he writes as easily as his friend, and is a more genuine poet. Lord Carlisle has written some too, to his wife's sister, Lady Louisa Leveson: I shall have them too, as a *noble* author's — but I have seen them and they are not worth sending; no more than some by Lord Palmerston, occasioned by others written some time ago by the Duchess of Devonshire when a girl to her father. These are a greater rarity, and I am laying out for them. Thank my stars I have done both with authorship and noble authors, for my Lord Lyttelton has printed a speech, though I thought we should not have had his till his execution. It is a poor affair, void of argument and grossly abusive on Lord Camden. It will be as difficult for the Court to uphold his oratory as his character, if he has recourse to the press.

Burke has printed a second speech, which I prefer much to his first. It is grave, solid, temperate and chaster from exuberant imagination. If his fancy breaks out, it does not soar above the third heaven and come tumbling down flat. Apropos to authors, the husband of Mrs. Montagu of Shakespeareshire is dead, and has left her an estate of seven thousand pounds a year in her own power. Will you come and be a candidate for her hand; I conclude it will be given to a champion at some Olympic games, and were I she, I would sooner marry you than Pindar.

The history of the Heroine Kingstone, as registered in our daily chronicles, is literally authentic, and so is

the respect paid to her in the King's bench, though I suppose, penned by herself,

> For little Brimstones oft submit to fate
> That great ones may enjoy the world in state.

The intrepidity of her countenance, while her indictment was reading, was worthy of Joan of Arc. I'm persuaded she will avoid any further trial.

Thank you for your Oxonian anecdotes, but alas! they may be paralleled all over the kingdom. In return I will write next week to France for the two tracts you wot of; you shall not be idle for want of any thing I can pimp for.

I am happily embarked on two vast folios of the History of Devonshire, which I prefer to every author of the age but one. I have picked up some excellent narratives of Mr. Bruce, but have not room for them; but here is what is better. He was asked before G. Selwyn if the Abyssinians have any music? he replied they have one *Lyre*. Selwyn whispered his neighbour, "They have one less since he left their country." Adieu! I remove to Strawberry to-morrow.

Yours ever

H. W.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, July 10, 1775.

I have been so constantly here and know so little, that if I told you what I do know, it would be but a transcript of the newspapers. The general opinion is

that the war is to be pursued: and so far we and the Americans agree that the news in the meadows (our Mall) last night was, that the congress has taken the same resolution, and as they have not quite so far to send troops, will probably be a little more alert in putting their resolutions in execution. The admiral, I was told too thinks he shall be desired to convey the garrison of Boston, not into the heart of the Colonies, but home. I am amazed the parliament does not meet and vote that this will be a breach of the Act of Navigation. The Colonies are really so cowardly, that they go on like the old song, beating those who never beat them in their lives, and have driven away all the cattle from General Gage's Smithfield, and burnt a schooner that he sent to defend them. As the stocks have shown no sensibility till now, I suppose some rich *butcher* has sold out. This is all I can tell you of politics.

To your other question, I doubt, I doubt I shall not see Yorkshire this summer. I am actually thinking of a tour to Paris; and if I do go, it will be before the end of August. Shall I bring you a slice of their English gardens! or a whole one second-hand; they may be out of fashion by this time, and the moment any thing is, they sell it.

Has a little book called the *Correspondents* strolled so far north? It is a singular publication, and an abominable one; at least I suspect the motive to be so, they are letters between a late grave noble author and his daughter-in-law, before she married his son, they

are perfectly innocent, and very good and very wise — but the spirit was not always entirely uppermost. They seem to be genuine, but if they are, one must guess and abhor the publisher.

Mrs. Wood publishes an Essay; which her husband showed me and I liked, on Homer's country. My late brethren, the Antiquaries, have given a third volume, with some pretty plates of horns, and some trifling trinkets, dissertations on cockfighting and shoeing horses, and half a volume on their print of the interview in the Vale of Cloth of gold, and the room at Cowdry, in which I am censured for liking it only as a curiosity and not as a picture, though there is no more perspective or drawing than in an Indian screen. To stamp my doom, in the index is said, *the Cowdry picture defended against Mr. W.*— see what it is to try to teach owls to be singing birds! I was the first soul that ever endeavoured to introduce a little taste into English Antiquities, and had persuaded the world not to laugh at our Hearnes and Hollingsheds, and the graceless loggerheads fly in my face! but I have left them to themselves and could not have left them in worse hands.

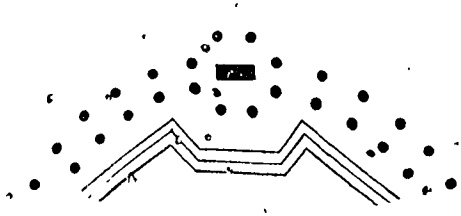
This letter is only chaperon to a parcel that I must beg you to convey to Peckitt at York, and which I send open to save troubling you with the purport (is not this an *Iricism?*) when you have read it or not, as you please, you will be so good as to seal it.

July 12th. Since I began my letter two days ago, I have taken my resolution; and shall set out on the 14th

of next month, to be back in the beginning of October, by which time I suppose you will have frightened the Americans out of their senses, or the Americans the ministers into theirs.

I have not yet seen the reviews for this month; those of the last were exceedingly civil to you. One piece of service you have rendered me. The proprietor of the asterisk on Lord Clarendon's history has certainly reconnoitred himself, for he has not called on me since the publication, though very civil when we meet, yet never opening his mouth on that subject. I bear this misfortune with great philosophy, as I always do every thing I do not care about.

My Lord of Rochester has consulted me for an altar-piece for the choir of Westminster. I have suggested an octagon canopy of open arches, like Chichester Cross, to be elevated on a flight of steps, with the altar in the middle, and semicircular arcades to join the stalls, so that the Confessor's Chapel and tombs may be seen through in perspective. His lordship, indeed, wanted to remove that whole chapel, but his chapter luckily opposed. Here is the ground plot of my idea; if you approve it you may draw the elevation as beautifully as you please.



TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, June 17, 1775.

You are goodness itself for sending me what you have sent me; I thank you for the French before I read it. Let the books be as bad as you say, they may perhaps lead one to think of something better; if they don't you know, there is no harm done. With respect to the English, I think much the same about them as you do; the young cub's is certainly the best; it has something of character and originality about it. The other is the most old-fashioned thing to be written by a young man of fashion, that I ever read. He might have writ it in a full-bottomed wig, a cravat and roll-ups. And Sir Conyers Darcy, had he been alive, might have admired it, and carried it to Lady Betty Germaine, as a *jeu d'esprit* of my Lord Landsdown's. If my friend Mr. Kirgate had not dated it, I should have thought it printed somewhere about the four last years of Queen Anne. *Explicit* my criticism.

You are always telling me of your additional noble authors, and do not mention one worth all the rest of the bunch:—I mean my neighbour here, Lord Effingham. Was there ever any thing, ancient or modern, better, either in sentiment or language, than his late speech! I have one miserable defect in my constitution, which is that I never could bear above one pint of port at a sitting; a bottle was always too much for me, else I would incontinently introduce

myself to his lordship by an ode, and he should be my Pollio. I would hope to be one of his club at Boston Castle,* and try to leap a five-barred gate with his lady. Seriously though, is it not a pity that a man of such integrity and ability should be what he is.

A man who styles himself Philo Gray of Salisbury, has twitted me in the newspaper for not publishing a complete edition of Gray, because I have omitted the stanzas on a Decayed Statesman; you must take this sin of mine upon your own back; I suspect it is Almon, in order to sell his own Foundling Hospital of Wit, where those verses are printed.

Mr. James Boswell, the friend of Paoli and Dr. Johnson, has writ me a very Scotch letter about Gray's character, to tell me it was written by a friend of his, Mr. Temple, and that he put it into the London Magazine without his leave. I writ him a very plain English answer, which I hope will quit me of this correspondent. My Oxonian correspondence about Strabo is also at an end, which I rejoice at, for I have had so many letters to answer, which these memoirs have occasioned, that I have hardly had time to write to those whom I love to write to.

Though I am a freemason, I am not a grand-master, and therefore cannot myself call the lodge you wish me to call.

* A room which he built about two years ago on a fine brow of a hill, between this place and Rotherham, which commands much the best prospect in this county. He christened it Boston Castle, because no tea was ever to be drank in it. The statute is religiously observed.

Pray send me all the news you can about America; I take for granted that by this time Gage must be on shipboard. Is there no chance of your coming down to Wentworth Castle this summer? I hear Lord Strafford is now there. I hope the present warm weather contents you, and that you begin to think our good planet has not been pushed so far out of its former orbit, as some philosophers have suspected. Every thing here give us the prospect of plenty, and we are not in the least burnt up. Believe me, dear Sir,

most truly yours

W. MASON.

Is Lord Nuneham still in town? I have not yet written to him. Shame! shame!

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, July 31, 1775.

I am glad that you are going to France; not because you are going to France, but because the intention indicates that you are in good health and spirits, and since you will not come into Yorkshire, you may as well be in France as at Strawberry, as to my particular interest in the matter. Besides I look upon myself as having a kind of hereditary right in your correspondence while abroad, which may make amends for certain excellent letters I returned you heretofore, and which had I retained I should have read at least once

a year with fresh delight, and not have envied people who relish Madame Sevigné, who you know is beyond my taste, to my shame be it spoken,

I have no commission to give you, except, peradventure, you could smuggle me over Monsieur Watelet's twelve little boats that support his bridge, with all the *caisses garnies de fleurs*, and his *treillages en lozange peintes en blanc*. I have lately dug a horsepond, to which I think such a bridge would make a good accompaniment. I wish you would go see his Laurentin, and describe it to me in your English, for I do not well comprehend his French. He says it is but *une heure de distance de la ville;* if by *ville* he means Paris as we say town, surely you might easily take the expedition. But before you go, I wish you would enquire amongst my brethren of the church, whether the Archbishop of Canterbury has prepared a form of prayer with thanksgiving for our late victory. I want to know this that I may sit down and write my Fast sermon, and be in readiness for that solemnity. I take it for granted his Majesty will go to Paul's, and I am sorry I resigned my chaplainship, else I might have got my Lord Holdernesse's interest to preach before him on the occasion. If the Bishops sit down in good earnest to write a proper form, I think they should mix thanksgiving and fasting together; there would be something new in the idea; it would be like a supper of hot and cold, which I believe the French cooks call an *ambiau*.

You did not see the London Review by Dr. Kenrick,

else you would have been convinced what a very mediocre poet Gray was, and what a bold panegyrist I am to dare to commend his poetry. The world, I believe are of the doctor's opinion, for the second edition is not half sold: no matter, if they will but continue to buy my Lord Chesterfield's Letters, Dodsley and I shall be satisfied.

I like your idea for the high altar of Westminster so prodigiously that I am sure it will never be executed, at least not in our day. When our popish sons of Canada shall have helped us to conquer our puritan sons of Boston, they will perhaps choose to conquer their heretical mother of England, and then Chichester cross will walk to Westminster Abbey. When I began to write this sentence, I never thought it would conclude so like a prophecy; therefore I do believe it will be a true prophecy, for it certainly flowed from an unpremeditated pen.

I will not wish you a good voyage, because I hope to hear from you again before you embark. I mean to visit my Lord Strafford to morrow, when I fancy we shall be unfashionable enough to drink your health. I forwarded your armorial parcel to Peckitt immediately, and am, dear Sir,

very sincerely yours

W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 7, 1775.

Let me tell you you have no more taste than Dr. Kenrick, if you do not like Madame de Sevigné's letters. Read them again; they are one of the very few books, that like Gray's life, improve upon one every time one reads them. You have still less taste if you like my letters, which have nothing original, and if they have any thing good, so much the worse, for it can only be from having read her letters, and his. He came perfect out of the egg-shell, and wrote as well at eighteen as ever he did — nay, letters better, for his natural humour was in its bloom, and not wrinkled by low spirits, dissatisfaction, or the character he had assumed. I do not care a straw whether Dr. Kenrick and Scotland can persuade England, that he was no poet. There is no common sense left in this country;

With Arts and Sciences it has travelled West.

The Americans will admire him and you, and they are the only people by whom one would wish to be admired. The world is divided into two nations, men of sense that *will* be free, and fools that like to be slaves. What a figure do two great empires make at this moment! Spain, mistress of Peru and Mexico, amazes Europe with an invincible armada; at last it sails to Algiers, and disbarks its whole contents, even to the provisions of the fleet. It is beaten shamefully,

loses all its stores, and has scarce bread left to last till it gets back into its own ports!

Mrs. Britannia orders her senate to proclaim America a continent of cowards, and vote it should be starved unless it will drink tea with her. She sends her only army to be besieged in one of their towns, and half her fleet to besiege the *terra firma*, but orders her army to do nothing, in hopes that the American senate at Philadelphia will be so frightened at the British army being beseiged in Boston, that it will sue for peace. At last she gives her army leave to sally out, but being twice defeated, she determines to carry on the war so vigourously till she has not a man left, that all England will be satisfied with the total loss of America; and if every body is satisfied, who can be blamed? Besides is not our dignity maintained? have not we carried our majesty beyond all example? when did you ever read before of a besieged army threatening military execution on the country of the besiegers! *car tel est notre plaisir!* but alack! we are like the mock Doctor; we have made the heart and the liver change sides; *cela étoit autrefois ainsi, mais nous avons changé tout cela!*

I will certainly visit Monsr. Watelet's garden that he has curled and powdered *à l'Angloise*. I shall like to be amused with less serious follies than our own, though I doubt I shall find they laugh a little more at us than we can at them. Well! I will wrap myself up in my *Robinhood*! They cannot say the good old man my father did it. Have you heard the history of Foote and her Grace of Kingston? She applied to the

Lord Chamberlain, and prevented the piece being licensed, though Foote had an audience, and with his usual modesty assured her he had not had her grace in view. The dame, as if he had been a member of parliament, offered to buy him off. Aristophanes's Grecian virtue was not to be corrupted; but he offered to read the piece, and blot out whatever passages she would mark, that she thought applicable to her case. She was too cunning to bite at this; and they parted. He swears he will not only print his comedy, but act her in Lady Brumpton. He has already printed his letter to Lord Hertford; and not content with that, being asked why it was not licensed, replied, why my Lord Hertford desired me to make his youngest son a box-keeper, and because I would not, he stopp'd my play. Upon my word, if the stage and the press are not checked, we shall have the army, on its return from Boston, besieged in the Haymarket itself: what are we come to, if maids of honour cannot marry two husbands in quiet! Well General Gage is recalled, and is to be hanged; we had conquered America by this time, they say, if he had not betrayed us, and desired the provincials to block him up — so *en attendant* — Hancock and Adams, and Putnam and Washington, you may divert yourselves with executing your own General. Voltaire will abuse you, as he did about poor Byng; but really a government must condemn somebody, or the mob, — but I am going to Paris, and leave you to your own devices. Don't finish your Essay on Gardening till I bring you the newest improvements from the

Opera, where to be sure the Elysian fields will be laid out *naturally*. If any thing strikes me particularly, you shall hear from me, but as my stay will be short, I don't promise, for I have been so often at Paris, that my staring is extremely *emoussé*, and one must travel to Abyssinia, to find any thing very new. Adieu.

Yours entirely

H. W.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Parjs, Sept. 6, 1775.

I have made very little progress yet towards the account I am to give you of the propagation of the faith in this kingdom, but stay, this is a little too metaphoric; and lest I should be taken for an ex-jesuit or a spy, I declare, like the writer of an Opera, that I neither believe in the gods of old Rome or new, excepting Vertumnus, Flora and Pomona, and that I am going to write to you my Provincial, on the conversion of the French to English gardening. I have begun my observation as methodically as if I was to draw up an article for the Encyclopedia; I have laid the axe to the root of the tree, for I have begun by visiting M. Watelet's Isle, called *le Moulin Joli*. If he has laid the axe to the root and even to the branches, he has used it no where else. Instead of finding as I expected, a windmill made of ivory and inlaid with false stones; instead of Dryads and Hamadryads gathering

acorns in baskets of gauze, M. Watelet has jumped back into nature, when she was not above five hundred years old — in one word his *Island* differs in nothing from a French garden into which no mortal has set his foot for the last century, it is an *ate* (I don't know whether I spell well) joined to his terra firma, by two bridges, one of which he calls Dutch and the other Chinese, and which are as unlike either as two peas, and which is pierced and divided into strait narrow walks *en berceau* and surrounded by a rude path quite round. To give this *étoile* an air *champêtre*, a plenary indulgence has been granted to every nettle, thistle and bramble *that grew in the garden, and they seem good in his sight.* The receipt is as follows, take an *ate* full of willows, cram it full of small elms and poplar pines, strip them into cradles, and cut them into paths, and leave all the rest as rough as you found it, and you will have a *Moulin Joli.* You must know this effort of genius is the more provoking, as the situation is charming, besides that the isle is in the middle of the Seine, every peep-hole (though so small that you seem to look through the diminishing end of a spying glass) besides terminating on one real windmill, is bounded by a chateau, a clocher, a village, a couvent, a villa where Henrietta Maria was educated, or hermitage to which Bossuet retired, not to mortify himself but Fenelon. It is true, you catch these points of view over wide fields of chalk, which would produce frankincense as soon as grass, and which if they had symptoms of verdure, were

waving ranks of fennel, I always perceive here, when I am out of Paris; but I never can think myself in the country, I shall next week see some more English Essays.

But they are imitating us in better things, their King is of an excellent disposition, he has driven away the Chancellor, the Duc d'Anguillon, and those wretches who had given perfection to despotism in the last reign. Monsr. de Maurepas restored the old Parliament, and Monsr. Turgot, the comptroller General, has destroyed corvées, that most execrable oppression, and is every day planning and attempting acts for public happiness. The Eloges of the academy roll on maxims of virtue and patriotism, and the king publickly applauds them, you may judge whether they do not stare at all we are doing! they will not believe me when I tell them that the American war is *fashionable,* for one is forced to use that word to convey to them an idea of the majority. A great lady asked me tother day, if I was not a Bostonian? and I have not met with a single Frenchman who does not express indignation or sneer contempt at all our late acts of parliament. Monsr. de Castries being told that Lord North has the garter, was surprised and said for what? for having lost America! — Upon these subjects, as I have not a vast deal to say on behalf of my dear country, I chuse to shift the conversation to her Grace of Kingston, whose history seems as strange to them as our politics. What a chef-de-œuvre is Foote's answer.

Sept. 10.

Chap. II.

On Anglo-Franco gardens,

which by the bye they call Anglo-Chinois gardens, as they say, that by the help of Sir William Chambers's lunettes they have detected us for having stolen our gardens from the Chinese. I shall tell them another tale when I publish my last volume. Yesterday I went to see the Countess de Bouffler's English garden at Auteuil, and it is strictly English, and begotten by her on an English gardener. There are fifty-two acres, which ascend from the house up a hill that is laid out in fields with a sunk fence and loose trees and shrubs, and has tolerable turf, except that it is coarse and of a green seldom worn by a gentleman's garden in England. All along the summit reigns a noble terrass surrounded by the Bois de Boulogne into which a grille opens upon a lofty avenue bounded by a sugar-loaf hill. The terrass looks over the lawn upon a glorious prospect, which begins from the left with one of the king's houses, is joined by a wood out of which juts Passy, the Duc de Penthiévre's, that forms the side-scene and flings a rich view of hills and towns to a great distance. The middle of the landscape advances again; on the foreground are villages and villas, over which is extended all Paris with the horizon broken by the towers and domes of Notre Dame, St. Sulpice, the Invalides, the Val de Grace, &c.; the whole height of the semicircle goes off in hills decked with villages and country houses that are closed by Meudon, and

and forests on higher hills. In this sumptuous prospect nothing is wanting but verdure and water of which you do not see a drop. In short, they can never have as beautiful landscapes as ours, till they have as bad a climate.

I think I shall stay here a month longer. If you send me a line, direct it to Arlington; it will be conveyed or kept for me,

yours ever,

H. W.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, Aston, Oct. 22, 1775.

My newspaper has this day announced your arrival, I will not therefore defer a moment to answer your most agreeable letter from Paris, of the 6th of last month, which I should have answered immediately after I received it, had there been a chance of its reaching you while in France, but I got it late, being absent on a visit in Staffordshire; all this however is idle apology, let me hasten to enquire how you do after your tour, and that before the meeting of parliament, when nobody will be well, either those in parliament, or out, (if I have the gift of prophecy) except peradventure the new made lords, who will choose to be in good spirits till the novelty of their nobility ceases. But as for me, *il faut cultiver mon jardin*, and therefore I'll only talk to you at present on the theme of

your last letter, and tell you that I am as well acquainted now with M. Watelet's *moulin joli*, as if I had seen it with my own eyes; such are your descriptive powers, when you please to make use of them: not that I wish you often to make use of them on such a subject, and yet to describe bad taste well, requires as much the powers of a master as to describe good, and the description is perhaps full as useful, always more entertaining; once more, therefore, I thank you for the treat you have given me. I have nothing to send you in return, except a story which I picked up the other day from a country squire, who had the honour to dine with her Grace of Kingston, at Grantham, in her way from Thoresby to town. She was attended by three elderly personages dressed in black, one of which he found was her lawyer, the second her chaplain, and the third a German physician, by name Dr. Falke. After dinner her grace retired, and the lawyer began a very high encomium on her understanding, of which he gave many specimens in his own way relative to her late manœuvres in the courts of law. The squire heard him with attention, and when he had finished his panegyric reply'd very bluntly, Mr. Lawyer, this may be all very true, I believe the Dutchess is a very clever sort of a woman, but by G— she never was so much out in her life as when she ventured to write a letter to Foote. The lawyer owned she had better have let that alone, upon which Dr. Falke got up, ran to the squire, and taking him by the button, said in very broken English, "O sire me give you letel piece of advice; pray no mention

such matter to her Grace, her Grace no bear to hear of it."

This story I think carries its own marks of authenticity about it. I will not answer, for another he told, which was, that when she was in deep mourning, she eat black puddings, and drank black cherry brandy, not being able to bear to eat or drink any thing of a gayer colour. This latter I only give you as bentrovato. I agree with you in thinking Foote's answer one of the very best things in the English language, and prefer it in its kind; Mr. Pope's letter to Lord Hervey is nothing to it.

This letter being only to ask you how you do after your voyage, and having nothing to say about myself worth your hearing, ought to conclude soon, and perhaps the sooner the better; it shall not however conclude without expressing how very much, and how sincerely I am, dear Sir,

your faithful servant

W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 25, 1775.

I am returned to my own Lares and Penates, — to my dogs and cats; and was not a little edified by my journey, I saw a king who accords every thing that is asked for the good of his people, and I saw two ministers, Messieurs de Malherbes and Turgot, who do not let their master's benevolent disposition rust. The

latter is attempting to take off *corvées*; that *quintesse* of cruel and ostentatious despotism, but the *country gentlemen*, that race of interested stupidity, will baffle him. Monsieur de Malesherbes, in the most simple and unaffected manner, gave me an account of his visitation of the Bastile, whence he released the prisoners, half of whom were mad with their misfortunes, and of many of whom he could not find even the causes of their commitment. One man refused his liberty; he said he had been prisoner fifteen years, and had nothing in the world left; that the king lodged and fed him, and he would not quit the Bastile unless they would give him half his pension. M. de Malesherbes reported it to the king, who replied, *c'est juste*, and the man has fifteen hundred livres a year and his freedom. This excellent magistrate, who made my tears run down my cheeks, added that what the prisoners complained of most was the want of pen and ink. He ordered it. The dæmons remonstrated and said the prisoners would only make use of the pen to write memorials against the ministers; he replied, *tant mieux*. He is going to erect a court of six masters of Request to examine the petitions of those who demand *lettres de cachet* for their relations. Under the late Duc de la Vrilliere, his mistress, Madame Sabatin, had a bureau of printed *lettres de cachet* with blanks, which she sold for twenty-five louis a piece. When a great Scotch judge was last in France, at the restoration of the old parliament, he said, "If the ministers mean the good of the people, they are doing right, but if they

regard the prerogative of the crown, very wrong;" what a diabolical But! Do not imagine these ministers will hold their places long; they will soon be epigrammatized out of them. The first event since my return, after hearing of this gaol-delivery, is Mr. Sayer being sent to the Bastile, but it is not the prisoners in this country that are mad, but the ministers. They have committed him for designing to steal the Tower and the King, he and one more, and I suppose send them to New York; not to Halifax, for that is gone, and Quebec too, and Boston by this time, so now we know what we have to do; only, retake all America, which is very easy from three hundred thousand cowards.

26th, Arlington Street.

I had written thus far last night as you perceive, and find your letter on my return, for which I would thank you more if you did not say such fine things to me; pray never do any more, I have no talent, nor any thing else but taste for those who have: and that taste is almost a sinecure. If I had time I could increase your Kingstoniana with still better stories, but she is not worth one's while. I have but just a moment to ask if there is any chance of seeing you this winter, which would be a great comfort, and I am not young enough to put off my pleasures. Adieu.

Pray did you pay Mr. Peckitt; tell me that I may pay you or him

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, Oct. 27, 1775.

I was at Strawberry Hill when your letter arrived, and could not thank you for it so early as I should have done if I had received it sooner. If my description of the *Moulin joli* pleased you, it was from the circumstances of the place, for I neither describe well nor recount well, nor have any original talent. I pretend to nothing, but taste for talents, and that taste is almost a sinecure. I am returned because I wanted to be *at home;* not that I was particularly charmed with France, or impatient to be in England, but when one is old and has no particular business anywhere, methinks one is *deplacé* any where but *chez soi.* The *Amor patriæ* burns in me no fiercer than love for my wife would, if I had one and she proved a shrew. I love the free constitution of England more than the acres, and should wish better to California if it had the better form of government; not but I can feel the pride of patriotism when my country is worth being proud of; when it sinks by its own folly, I content myself with my citizenship of the world, and pray for that part that is most reasonable.

I could improve your Kingstoniana if I had leisure; the subject in truth is little worth it, but as superlative in its kind. My chief business with you is to know if I am likely to see you this winter. My pleasures grow dear to me because I have no long time to enjoy

them, and cannot live on hopes. Though I still live in the world, most of my hours are passed alone, because they are not passed with the few I love, and all the rest are perfectly indifferent to me; old people are thought to have little affection, — how is that possible, for they seem to like company to the last? I should as soon think of taking leave of every body if I was dying. Of my cotemporaries for whom I do not care. I have seen or known enough, or too much, and to converse with young people, is like asking for the beginning of a story of which one is never to hear the end. With you I can never pass time enough, and alas pass very little; you are not, ought not to be so indifferent to the world as I am, and as you live more out it, why should not you keep up a little acquaintance with it? Your chief reason against coming is worn out by length of time, and other circumstances are such as to dispense with the reiteration of the grievance. It would not be expected, and probably not desired; I dare to say the coolness is sufficiently established.

As I am in town you may expect to talk of what you will see so much in the newspapers, the commitment of Mr. Sayer; but it appears to me so nonsensical a business, that I charitably conclude the ministers have some deeper scheme in view; they can never have sent a man to the Tower that they should have sent to Bedlam, if they do not want a pretence for greater strokes; or chuse to be laughed at for this, rather than have the people find fault with something else. However they have brought themselves into such diffi-

culties that I shall not wonder if they are puzzled which to prefer, and as it certainly is not genius that has led them into the scrape, it is not likely to help them out.

Tell me what is more to my purpose, what you have been doing, I am going to read Sterne's letters. From Paris I have absolutely brought nothing at all: my good friend, Europe is worn out, perhaps genius may rekindle in America, but what is that to me. Adieu.

P. S. I have run through a volume of Sterne's letters, and have read more unentertaining stuff. The D. of Grafton, Lord Lyttelton and the Bp. of Peterborough divided yesterday with the opposition. Don't you think the ship is sinking? come and see.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, Wentworth Castle, Nov. 20, 1775.

I have had your fashionable London influenza for above a fortnight (fresh imported to Aston by Mr. Verelst and kindly communicated to me in a post-chaise). Upon my getting a little better I came hither to pay my respects to Lord and Lady Strafford, to whom I had long owed a visit, and who have long been particularly civil to me, much of which civility I have always imputed to the partiality of your friendship for me; be this as it may, here I am, and much better for my journey, and a long walk which I took yester-

day in a clear frosty morning with his Lordship, all this if you can make an apology out of it, for I hardly can, is meant for one to you for my silence; certain it is my cold and the having nothing to say, prevented my writing at home; and as I meditated then a visit here, I thought I should perhaps find something more to say from hence; in this however I am mistaken, for except condoling with you for that you have lately lost £40. at loo, to Mrs. Howe, (which latter circumstance only is our topic of condolence, for if you had flung it into the Thames we should not have cared a whit about the matter) I find little more to put into my letter. One thing however may be necessary to hint that you are not quite in the odour of sanctity here for your long silence, but this I only gather from half dropt expressions, and these always accompanied with sentiments of great kindness, so that if you was to write a line or two soon, and before you see them in town I think it would be well taken. You are very kind to me in your last by expressing so great a desire of seeing me soon in town, and I feel, I assure you, as I ought on the subject and wish as much to be with you as you can wish it. But my reasons for staying in Yorkshire at present are very urgent. The manner in which Lord Holdernesse has disposed of his Aston estate of which Mr. Verelst has bought only a fourth part, and the rest sold in small parcels, will occasion so much difficulty in regulating my tythes with the new proprietors, that it is absolutely necessary I should be on the spot till after New year's day, and then this

matter will in fact be all settled, not by me, but my curate, Mr. Alderson, whose judgement and honesty I can fully depend upon, yet I must appear to do it myself to prevent any odium that might fall upon him from the parish, and indeed without my personal assent to every new contract they would not be valid. Early in February I must repair to my York residence, therefore till the beginning of May, I cannot possibly think of setting my face southward, but then I fully intend it. The Hertford street reason against my coming which you call, and which was once my chief reason, is now none at all.

Political matters seem now to be in such a state as to resemble the reign of chaos and old night, nay, to be the identical thing, but as that state was not without its deity, therefore in order to keep myself out of an uncomfortable atheistical way of thinking, I intend to worship Old Night in the form of that brazen image, commonly called the Dutchess of Bedford. I hope you will join with me in my devotions.

You ask me what I am doing, I am very innocently and very leisurely printing in the York press a few copies of my English garden, *il faut cultiver le jardin*, but this, God be thanked, I do not say in the spirit or meaning of Voltaire. In this way of printing I copy my betters and have the thoughts of publishing as far from me, as that very ingenious writer had who printed five years ago a History of the same art: I question whether either production will be *publici juris* till they are reprinted at Philadelphia with the *imprimatur* of

John Handcock, *Americæ Septentrionalis, R. P. Protector*, and that I suppose can hardly happen this current year. The Lord and Lady of this place send all sorts of good wishes to you, believe me to be, dear Sir, with perfect sincerity

yours

W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Nov. 27, 1775.

I thought it long since I heard from you; it is plain you did not forget me, for the first moment of an opportunity to show me kindness, made you show it; fortunately I had written to Ld. Strafford the very day you wrote to me, and our letters passed each other, though without bowing. I think it still more fortunate that I had not written sooner, because, I like to be obliged to you; I had delayed because in truth I had nothing to say but what I thought; and when my friends and I do not think alike, I prefer silence to contradiction or disputes, for I cannot say what I do not think, especially to my friends; to other people one can talk a good deal of nonsense which serves instead of thinking.

Your delay of coming displeases me, because what I wish, I wish for immediately; when spring comes, I shall be glad my joy was postponed, and I like better to see you at Strawberry than in Town, especially when

Strawberry is in its beauty: and as you and it are two chiefs of the few pleasures I have left, or to come, I am luxurious and love a compleat banquet.

What shall I say more? talk politics? no; we think too much alike. England was, Scotland is — indeed by the blunders the latter has made one sees its Irish origin, — but I had rather talk of any thing else. I see nothing but ruin whatever shall happen, and what idle sollicitude is that of childless old people, who are anxious about the first fifty years after their death, and do not reflect that in the eternity to follow, fifty or five hundred years are a moment, and that all countries fall sooner or later.

Naturally I fly to books, there is a finis too, for I cannot read Dean Tucker, nor newspapers. We have had nothing at all this winter but Sterne's letters, and what are almost as nothingly, — Lady Luxborough's. She does not write ill, or, as I expected affectedly, like a woman, but talks of *scrawls*, and of her letters being *stupid*. She had no spirit, no wit, knew no events; she idolizes poor Shenstone, who was scarce above her, and flatters him, to be flattered. A stronger proof of her having no taste is, that she says coldly, she likes Gray's Churchyard *well;* in good truth the productions of this country and age are suited to its natives. Mr. Cumberland, the maker of plays, told me lately, it *was pity Gray's letters were printed; they had disappointed him much;* no doubt he likes Sterne's, and Shenstone's, and Lady Luxborough's. Oh! Dodsley, print away: you will never want authors or

readers, unless a classic work like Gray's life should, as Richardson said of Milton, be born two thousand years after its time!

I approve your printing in manuscript, that is, not for the public, for who knows how long the public will be able, or be permitted to read? Bury a few copies against this Island is rediscovered, some American versed in the old English language will translate it, and revive the true taste in gardening; though he will smile at the diminutive scenes on the little Thames when he is planting a forest on the banks of the Croonoko. I love to skip into futurity and imagine what will be done on the giant scale of a new hemisphere; but I am in little London, and must go and dress for a dinner with some of the inhabitants of that ancient metropolis, now in ruins, which was really for a moment the capital of a large empire, but the poor man who made it so, outlived himself and the duration of the empire.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, Dec. 16, 1775.

I am much entertained with the newspaper account of the evidence of the three physicians before the House of Lords, I want to know whether it struck you in the same way. One talks of her grace being in a kind of stupor, and at intervals much affected in her understanding, a second of her being seemingly deprived of her recollection, and a third (her body physician),

says that if she continue to mend as she had done the last twenty-four hours, she would soon be well enough, &c. Now this seems to me to be a description of a person in her cups, rather than in the palsy. If I am uncharitable in my censure pray check me, although the subject be the person who calls herself Dutchess of Kingston, for even in this case I will kiss the rod.

I admire Mr. Cumberland's rudeness to you exceedingly, for to condemn Gray's letters to you who had contributed so much to the collection was worse than if he had condemned them to the editor. The editor might be excused in printing bad letters out of deference and respect to those who furnished him with them. The contributors to such a collection could have no such plea, but more than enough of this poor man, let him go on with his sentimental comedies, this anecdote shews he is qualified for the task, because it shews he can have no feeling. Taste in all cases is out of the question.

Pray is it certain that a great personage in his treaty for foreign troops styled himself Sovereign of the grand American empire? if it be, what an excellent moment he took for assuming such a title.

I have lately learned a very different doctrine about personal identity than Mr. Locke taught me at the university. He said I think that it consisted in consciousness of a man's knowing himself to be the same man to day that he was yesterday, &c. Now I say it depends merely upon the alphabet, every man has from his father and his godfather a certain quota of letters

given him at his birth and his baptism, by which he is, what he is, let him but contrive to change these and the coward of Minden becomes the secretary militant against America, and everybody instantly loses their recollection about him, as if they were in the same deplorable way with her grace of Kingston, nay, I would wager that his own recollection is lost too. If this be not a complete change of identity I know not what is; and yet it is all done by the power of the alphabet. Q. E. D.

I wish in your next favour which I hope to have soon, you would be pleased to seal with a very clear impression of your antique sacrifice, for I have been painting from a very bad one a figure in chiaro oscuro for one of my book presses, and I have succeeded so tolerably that I think it will do when finished from a better original.

Lord Strafford left Yorkshire I believe yesterday, but I have heard that he had received, and was much pleased with your remembrance of him. We talked little about politics when I was with him, yet what I said of that sort (which was by no means of the neutral kind) did not seem to displease him. Believe me, dear Sir,

most truly yours

W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, Dec. 21, 1775.

I shall make the impression of the seal to this letter as perfect as I can; yet probably it will ill answer your purpose for it is only one of Wedgwood's antiques, and they are not very sharp; you exercise I find, all your various talents, but the one I love the best *in you*. I should not say so much to every body: a thousand pictures give me pleasure for one poem.

Foote and you agree in convicting the Dutchess of ebriety, and you both prove it equally well in different ways. Nay, she seems to allow it herself, for she abandons insanity; intends, I hear, to rest her safety on pleading guilty, lest standing on her spotless innocence should drag to light too many crimes. Lord Mansfield has added one more to his own list; his shameless protection of her.

I never heard of the imperial title you mention, nor believe it, indeed I know of no treaty. That foreign troops have been treated for, is certain, if any are obtained, I am not in the secret. In the meantime, the empire is shrunk to as narrow limits as that of the Holy Roman empire; which when it had nothing left but one eagle made it into two, by splitting it, as cooks serve a pidgeon. By this time Canada probably is no part of the imperial dominions unless Lord Dunmore has transported it on board his own government and ship, where he pretends to have imprisoned one of the

provincial deputies, who to-day's papers say never existed — unless by your hypothesis of alphabetic identity, one man may become another. That many men do become other men, I see every day, and so entirely other men, that they retain none of the blushing shame of their original nymphood, when they become butterflies.

I felt Mr. Cumberland's folly so much, that his impertinence was lost on me. He has written an ode, as he modestly calls it in praise of Gray's odes — charitably no doubt to make the latter taken notice of. Garrick read it tother night at Mr. Beauclerc's, who comprehended so little what it was about, that he desired Garrick to read it backwards, and try if it would not be equally good; he did and it was. I came in just afterwards; and the conversation continuing, Garrick said, with all the candour he could affect, "I wonder at it, but people cry down Mr. Mason's life of Gray extremely; I really think it very ingenious." I made him no more answer than he deserved. I broke through this rule two days ago on a new impertinence to myself. In the paper-office there is a wight, called Thomas Astle, who lives like moths on old parchments. It was he who lent me the coronation roll, and to whom I communicated my book on Richard III, to every tittle of which he agreed. Some of the moths his *commensales* remonstrated to him I suppose, that he had fouled his own chrysalis by helping to unravel an intricate web. From that time I never saw him; on Monday he sent me a printed copy of

the act of attainder of George, Duke of Clarence, (which corroborates remarkably one of my arguments) but which he not perceiving, very impertinently added a quære, which implied I had been in the wrong. The quære itself was so absurd that I could not deny myself the pleasure of laughing at him and his council. I send you a copy of my letter as the shortest way of explaining what I have told you, and because I conclude the foolish Society of Antiquaries will be convinced he has guessed happily, and that we shall have a new dissertation against me in the next volume of the *old women's logic*, as I call the Archæologia. I have reserved two or three more arguments, with which they shall be treated if they do attack me again, but with which I would not trust Astle, lest any one of the body should have sense enough to see their folly and stop them. You must excuse me, but some time or other I am determined to publish all my answers. I am offended for the honour of Richard's understanding, that all they charge him with tends to represent him as a driveling fool, though indeed such are their understandings that they mean to prove he was an able knave.

Fools! yes, I think all the world is turned fool, or was born so, *cette tete à perruque*, that wig-block the chancellor, what do you think he has done? Burnt all his father's correspondence with Pope, Swift, Arbuthnot, &c. — why do you think? because several of the letters were indiscreet. To be sure he thought they would go and publish themselves, if not burnt, but indeed I

suspect the indiscretion was that there were some truths which it was not proper to preserve, considering *considerandis*. That is just what I should like to have seen, There was otherwise so much discretion, and so little of any thing else except hypocricy in all the letters of those men that have appeared, that I should not so much regret what discreet folly has now burnt. Apropos, did I ever tell you a most admirable bon mot of Mr. Bentley? he was talking to me of an old devout Lady St. John, who burnt a whole trunk of letters of the famous Lord Rochester, "for which," said Mr. Bentley, "her soul is now burning in Heaven." The oddness, confusion, and wit of the idea struck me of all things. I wish you, good night.

[*Enclosure.*]

TO THOMAS ASTLE ESQ.

SIR Decr. 19, 1775.

I am much obliged to you and return you my thanks for the paper you have sent me, you have added a question to it, which, if I understand it, you yourself, Sir, are more capable than any body of answering; you say "Is it probable that this instrument was framed by Richard Duke of Gloucester?" If by *framed* you mean drawn up, I should think princes of the blood in that barbarous age were not very expert in drawing acts of attainder, though a branch of the law, more in use then than since. But as I suppose you mean *forged*, you, Sir, so conversant in writings of that age can judge

better than any man, you may only mean *forged by his order*. Your reading much deeper than mine may furnish you with precedents of forged acts of attainder; I never heard of one, nor does my simple understanding suggest the use of such a forgery, on cases immediately pressing; because an act of attainder being a matter of public notoriety, it would be revolting the common sense of all mankind to plead such an one if it had not really existed. If it could be carried into execution by force, the force would avail without the forgery, and would be at once exaggerated and weakened by it. I cannot, therefore, conceive why Richard should make use of so absurd a trick, unless that having so little to do in so short and turbulent a reign, he amused himself with treasuring up in the Tower a forged act for the satisfaction of those who three hundred years afterwards should be glad of discovering new flaws in his character. As there are men so bigotted to old legends, I am persuaded, Sir, that you would please them by communicating your question to them. They would rejoice to suppose that Richard was more criminal than even the Lancastrian Historians represent him, and just at this moment I don't know whether they would not believe that Mrs. Rudd assisted him. I who am probably as absurd a bigot on the other side, see nothing in the paper you have sent me but a confirmation of Richard's innocence of the death of Clarence. As the Duke of Buckingham was appointed to superintend the execution, it is incredible that he should have been drowned in a

butt of Malmsey, and that Richard should have been the executioner. When a Seneschal of England, or as we call it a Lord High Steward, is appointed for a trial, at least for execution with all his officers, it looks very much as if even in that age proceedings were carried on with a little more formality than the careless writers of that time let us think. The appointment too of the Duke of Buckingham for that office, seems to add another improbability (and a work of supererogation) to Richard's forging the instrument. Did Richard really do nothing but what tended to increase his unpopularity, by glutting mankind with lies, forgeries, and absurdities which every man living could detect?

I take this opportunity, Sir, of telling you how sorry I am not to have seen you so long, and how glad I shall be to renew our acquaintance, especially if you like to talk over this old story with me, though I own it is of little importance, and pretty well exhausted.

I am, Sir, with great regard,
your obliged
humble servant
HOR. WALPOLE.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

DEAR SIR, Arlington Street, Feb. 6.

I send you word as soon as I can that I received your charming letter very safe, but that is all I can do or say, and God knows when I shall be able to send

you any other answer for I am, and have been this week confined to my bed with the gout in six or seven different places. As I never had it before in my leap year, I would suppose that it is owing now to the late bitter weather, for you see that even in my condition one can be fool enough to flatter oneself with some straw to the last. Adieu. I heartily wish you all I want, without envying you what I want.

Yours ever

H. W.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, York, Feb. 15, 1776.

I was extremely sorry to receive an answer to my last written by your amanuensis, yet I beg you would employ him immediately again just to tell me how you do, if you are not by this time able to use your own hand, which I heartily hope may be the case. As to this very troublesome and unwelcome guest visiting you a year sooner than you expected him, I can easily account for that from the late severe weather, especially when I consider that had it been twice as severe it would never have prompted you to button a single button the closer. I most cordially wish for a good account of you soon, and am, dear Sir,

most truly yours

W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Feb. 18, 1776.

As my illness prevented my answering your delightful letter I do not see why the leisure and solitude of convalescence should not be employed in replying to it, not poetically; for the current of the blood, frozen by age and chalkstoned by the gout, does not, though loosened from disease flow over the smooth pebbles of Helicon, mine at best, were factitious rills that like the artificial cascatelle of Hagley, played for moments to entertain visitors, and were not the natural bounty of the soil, *you* are forced to restrain your torrent and the dykes of prudence must be borne down before it overflows the country. Not so Mr. Anstey, because his muddy mill-pool had in one point of view, the roar and lustre of a cascade when it fell over a proper wheel, he thinks every pail full of its water, though soused down by a ploughman, has the same effect. His Somersetshire dialogue is stupidity itself, you described it prophetically before you saw it.

Somebody or other has given us an epistle of another kind by the late Lord Melcombe; not different from having more meaning, for Phœbus knows it has none at all, but so civil, so harmless, and so harmonious, that it is the ghost of one of Pope's tunes. How the puffy Peer must have sweated when learning to sing of Pope, whom he could have strangled! The whole and sole drift of this cantata is to call Lord Bute Pollio, and to beg to be his vicegerent upon earth. I should like

to have heard Lord Bute asking Sir Harry Erskine who Pollio was.

Mr. Whitehed has just published a pretty poem called *Variety*, in which there is humour and ingenuity, but not more poetry than is necessary for a laureate; however the plan is one, and is well wound up. I now pass to prose.

Lo, there is just appeared a truly classic work: a history, not majestic like Livy, nor compressed like Tacitus; not stamped with character like Clarendon; perhaps not so deep as Robertson's Scotland, but a thousand degrees above his Charles; not pointed like Voltaire, but as accurate as he is inexact; modest as he is *tranchant* and sly as Montesquieu without being so *recherché*; The style is as smooth as a Flemish picture, and the muscles are concealed and only for natural uses, not exaggerated like Michael Angelo's to show the painter's skill in anatomy; nor composed of the limbs of clowns of different nations, like Dr. Johnson's heterogeneous monsters. This book is Mr. Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. He is son of a late foolish Alderman, is a Member of Parliament, and called a whimsical one because he votes variously as his opinion leads him; and his first production was in French, in which language he shines too. I know him a little, never suspected the extent of his talents, for he is perfectly modest, or I want penetration, which I know too, but I intend to know him a great deal more — there! there is food for your residence at York.

Do I know nothing superior to Mr. Gibbon? yes, but not what will entertain you at York, Mr. Gibbon's are good sense and polished art. I talk of great original genius. Lady Di Beauclerc has made seven large drawings in Sut water (her first attempt of the kind) for scenes of my Mysterious Mother. Oh! such drawings, Guido's grace, Albano's children, Poussin's expression, Salvator's boldness in landscape and Andrea Sacchi's simplicity of composition might perhaps have equalled them had they wrought all together very fine; how an author's vanity can bestow bombast panegyric on his flatterers! Pray, Sir, when did I take myself for an original genius! Did not Shakespeare draw Hamlet from Olaus Ostrogothus, or some such name; did Le Sœur conceive the Chartreuse from any merit in the Legend of St. Bruno; seeing is believing, miracles are not ceased; I know how prejudiced I am apt to be; some time or other you will see whether I am so in this instance. Now for specific answers to your queries — many of which answers will not be specific, for I know little more than if I were at York. I know nothing of Garrick's sale of patent, but I know forty stories of his envy and jealousy, that are too long to tell you by mouth of pen — of a Monsr. le Texier, another real prodigy, who acts whole plays, in which every character is perfect — and pray observe he has not read *my* play. In sum, Garrick says when he quits the stage, he will read plays too, but they will be better than Monsr. Texier's (who only reads those of other authors) for he shall write them himself. This I know he has said

twice. *Ex pede Herculem.* The Duchess of Kingston only knows whether she will be tried. The Earl's zeal against her was as marvellous to me as to you; I know reasons why he should have done the reverse, and cannot reconcile contradictions. Why should not Sayre's affair sleep? what, who is awake. For your hundred other queries which you have not put to me, I shall not attempt to guess them, not from idleness, but from the probable incapacity of my being able to answer them. The womb of time is big; we shall see, whether she is delivered of mice or mountains.

One word about myself and I have done. I know you disliked my answer to Dr. Milles, and I know I was angry both at him and Mr. Hume. The latter had acted very treacherously by the story I have hinted at of the Swiss Reviewer. Dr. Milles is a fool, who had been set on by Lord Hardwicke and that set, and at whom, I have glanced. I have received many indirect little mischiefs from the Earl, who has of late courted me as much, and I have been civil to him. But my answers shall some time or other appear when I only shall be blamed and my antagonists will be dead, and not hurt by them. For Mr. Masters, he is a dirty simpleton, who began by flattering me and because I neglected him, joined the pack. The arguments in the answers are very essential to the question, and I shall not give myself the trouble of extracting the ridicule on the answerers, as they deserved it.

My hands you see are well, but I could not have written so long an epistle with my feet, which are still

in their flannels. As my spirits always revive in proportion as pain subsides, I shall take the liberty, Sir Residentiary, to trespass on your decorum by sending you an impromptu I wrote yesterday, to pretty Lady Craven, who sent me an Eclogue of her own, every stanza of which ended with *January*, and which she desired me not to criticise, as some of the rhimes were incorrect, a license I adopted in my second line:

Tho' lame and old, I do not burn
With fretfulness to scare ye;
And charms and wit like yours would turn
To May my January.

The God who can inspire and heal
Sure breathed your lines, sweet Fairy
For as I read, I feel, I feel,
I am not quite January.

Probably you would have liked better to have the Eclogue, but I had not leave to send it.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Feb. 29, 1776.

My confinement has made me a great devourer of quartos, I am impatient to tell you what I have found in one as large as Mr. Gibbon's, not quite so excellent a work, nor so compressed, but which is not barren of entertainment, though the first sections to be sure are to me absolute Hebrew. This is Dr. Burney's History of Music, a volume that I fear will a little interfere with my friend Sir John Hawkins's on the same subject.

I must begin with telling you that in page 168 the Doctor says, he holds it impossible to be a great poet and a great musician too. Now, not to mention Gray, who (I believe, though I know nothing of music,) was a great musician; how could he forget you whom he has not forgotten, for he has celebrated your harmonic knowledge in his notes, though I perceive he did not know that you are an *inventor* in the science, and have begotten a new instrument by the marriage of two others:— but to the point.

Would you believe that the great Abyssinian, Mr. Bruce, whom Dr. B. made me laugh by seriously calling the *intrepid traveller*, has had the intrepidity to write a letter to the Dr., which the latter has printed in his book, and in which he intrepidly tells lies of almost as large a magnitude as his story of the bramble, into which his Majesty of Abyssinia and his whole army were led by the fault of his general, and which bramble was so tenacious, that his Majesty could not disentangle himself without stripping to the skin and leaving his robes in it, and it being death in that country to procure or compass, the Sovereign's nudity, the general lost his head for the error of his march.

In short Mr. Bruce has not only described six Abyssinian musical instruments, and given their names in the ancient Ethiopic and in the court language, but contributed a Theban harp, as beautifully and gracefully designed as if Mr. Adam had drawn it for Lady Mansfield's dressing-room, with a sphinx, masks, a patera, and a running foliage of leaves. This harp, Mr. Bruce

says, he copied from a painting in fresco on the inside of a cavern near the ancient Thebes, and that it was painted there by the order of Sesostris, and he is not at all astonished at the mirical of its preservation, though he treats poor accurate Dr. Pococke with great contempt for having been in the cave without seeing this prodigy, which however, graceful as its form is, Mr. Bruce thinks was not executed by any artist superior to a sign painter, yet so high was the perfection of the arts in the time of *Sesac*, that a common mechanic could not help rendering faithfully a common instrument. I am sorry our Apelles, Sir Joshua, has not the sign painters secret of making his colours last in an open cave for thousands of years.

It is unlucky that Mr. Bruce does not possess another secret reckoned very essential to intrepid travellers, a good memory. Last Spring he dined at Mr. Crauford's, George Selwyn was one of the company; after relating the story of the bramble and several other curious particulars, somebody asked Mr. Bruce, if the Abyssinians had any musical instruments? Musical instruments, said he, and paused — yes I think I remember one lyre; Geo. Selwyn, whispered his neighbour, "I am sure there is one less since he came out of the country." There are now six instruments there.

Remember this letter is only for your own private eye, I do not desire to be engaged in a controversy or a duel.

My gout is waning, and my ambition looks down to

getting on a shoe in a few days. Mr. Stonhewer called on me yesterday, and I diverted him with what had just happened. Mr. Cambridge had been with me, and asked me if I knew the famous Beaumarchais, who is in England, I said, "no, Sir, nor ever intend it." "Well now said he, that is exactly my way; I made a resolution early never to be acquainted with authors, they are so vain and so *troublesome*." I am persuaded he has got acquainted with Beaumarchais by this time. Adieu.

P. S. When you read Dr. Burney, pray observe in p. 256 in the notes, a quotation from Huet that exactly describes Bryant's Ancient Mythology.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, March 11, 1776.

Venisti, vidi, vicisti, your letter arrived on Saturday, General Conway came yesterday; Sir John Legard will have ample credentials to Brunswic for Mr. Conway is in friendship and correspondence with Prince Ferdinand, and Sir John will certainly have leave to go *after the review* if officers are allowed to go abroad *at this time.* Thank you heartily for giving me this opportunity.

Mr. Cumberland has published two odes in which he has been so bountiful as to secure immortality for Gray, for Dr. James's powder, and indeed for his own odes, for Father Time would fall asleep before he could read them

through. There is a dedication to Romney the painter, that hisses with the pertness of a dull man.

Bishop Keene wrote to me tother day to know if I knew any thing of a whole length of my father, that was to be sold by auction, and if I had any objection to his buying it; was this folly! or is it repentance, and he wants a memento to remind him that he cheated my father's daughter of a living and of marriage.

I mentioned this to my nephew the Bishop of Exeter just now, who told me that when Mr. Grenville was turned out, who had offered my Lord of Ely the primacy of Ireland, he sent for the person who had brought him the offer, and desired him to tell Mr. Grenville, that he should always acknowledge the obligation, but that as Mr. Grenville was now out, he thought it right (perhaps he said honest) to tell him that his Lordship must look up to the King, and to *whomever* his Majesty should make his minister.

The Duke of Wirtemburg is arrived with a mistress, whom he got made Countess of the Empire. The Queen of France would not receive her; she has been received at court here; the man who keeps the Hotel Garni in Covent Garden would not lodge her for the reputation of his house.

Here is a new Epigram from France.

Quelqu'un, dit on, a peint Voltaire
Entre la Beaumelle, et Fréron;
Cela feroit un vrai Calvaire
S'il n'y manquoit le bon larron.

Voltaire himself has written a little poem called

Sesostris, which I do not send you, for it is only the worn out choice of Hercules.

P. S. I have often thought of a thing, and which, as you are now at York I will mention, and beg you to suggest to Peckitt. You know he and all the modern glass-painters cannot recover the fine ancient reds and greens; how is that possible, when every necklace shop sells false rubies and emeralds, which jewellers must, take out of the setting, to be sure they are not true! and what are those counterfeits but coloured glass; pray too, could not Peckitt sketch the exact faces of Henry IV and Richard III from their statues on the screen of your cathedral. I would pay him for them.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

March 25, 1776.

What I here send you was written yesterday *currente calamo*, as you will see, and might be much improved if you would please to retouch it. The idea I think is a good one and I could wish it might appear in the papers for some personal reasons of my own; if any use is made of it, it must be transcribed by some person who does not know my hand, and the original burnt: I fear after all the usual fate that attends my squibs will fall on this, and it will be still born. I question much whether every news printer be not in her pay at present, and yet you see all mention of her

tryal is for that account avoided in the letter; I will say no more, but burn it or otherwise as you think best. I send it through the Secretary's office to you for safety.

[*Enclosure.*]

TO HER GRACE THE DUTCHESS OF KINGSTON.

MADAM, Isle of Ely, March 22, 1776.

I have just now seen in the public papers that your Grace, with a spirit of christian benevolence which exceeds that of our two Metropolitans in the proportions of somewhat more than three to two, has contributed the sum of fifty pounds towards alleviating the distresses of the clergy in North America. This emboldens me to ask you a few questions concerning that charity, and to state an objection or two relative to it, not doubting but that your Grace before you thought it prudent to honor the list of subscribers with a name, that would undoubtedly make both the clergy and laity proud of following so illustrious an example demanded to see those authentic accounts of the distresses in question, which have hitherto been withheld from the world, though the press daily afforded so ready a method of communication.

I beg, therefore, to learn from your Grace whether these misfortunes affect the parochial clergy only, in North America, or extend also to the missionarys sent out for the Propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts by the society intended for that purpose.

If the parochial clergy be the only sufferers it must be by deprivation, or loss of their tythes and oblations. Now I should conceive that the best way to relieve them in this point would be to take them home (for the Congress I presume would readily part with them) and to place them immediately under the patronage of those diocesans from whom they received their letters of orders, for it cannot be doubted but that many of their Lordships, who have shewn so much alacrity to provide for their nephews, daughters' husbands, &c. &c., might in a very short space of time put these their distrest brethren more at their ease than they were even before the American troubles broke out. Of this fact we are very sure, that the annual income of the dignities and pluralities held by two relatives of one opulent prelate more than trebles the sum that the whole bench have subscribed on this occasion, with your Grace's fifty pounds into the bargain.

If these distresses extend to the Missionarys, the same mode of recalling them is more peculiarly necessary, indeed it would be now necessary even if they were not distrest, at least they should have orders from Administration to look upon their missions as sinecures; for while the Indians remain in their heathen state they will will surely be better allies to us, and answer our present political purposes with greater energy, than if they were previously converted to Christianity, except indeed these Missionaries were gifted enough to regenerate them in a moment into such good Christians as your Grace, Lord Sandwich, and Lord G. Germaine, a

species of conversion, which as miracles have ceased, is rather to be wished than to be expected.

But perhaps your Grace will say, "who are you that ask these impertinent questions?" "Madam, I am a country clergyman." "Go then to your diocesan to satisfy your scruples of conscience." "No madam, I choose to apply myself to you and for these three cogent reasons."

First, I believe from my soul that you write letters with more ease than my diocesan, and that your epistolary style is much more spiritual and poignant, especially after dinner. Secondly, because you have much more Christian humility and obliging condescension than my diocesan; he I know would flout my tattered crape and disdain to give me an answer, but when I tell your Grace that I can bring my college certificate that I had an university education, and my parochial register that I was born of honest parents, I am morally certain that you will not be too haughty to become my correspondent. No, you will never deny that honour to a clergyman of the church of England, which you so lately bestowed on a reptile, whom you believed to be the son of a merry andrew. Thirdly, and lastly, your Grace has by this, your late superb donation taken this charity into your immediate and personal protection. You are by this act and deed of yours, become *the head of the clergy*; and therefore though I am the lowest member of that body, I have the ambition on this occasion to treat with principals only. Beholding your Grace in this most respectable light, I subscribe myself with the truest devotion, Madam, your Grace's

most dutiful son and servant

a Country Clergyman.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

April 8, 1776.

You find Circe and Almæ Mater are too powerfull, perhaps they are in alliance, *il faut cultiver son jardin:* you must stick to your garden.

There is Dr. Chandler who was sent by the Dilettanti to, and has just published his travels in, Greece. They are rather travels in Pausanias, for he does little but tell us what Pausanias found worth seeing there. Except that, which is no merit, the book is ill written and unsatisfactory; and yet he revived my visions towards Athens, and made me wish I was a great king and could purchase to restore it, a great king probably, would hold it cheaper to conquer it. This Dr. Chandler, as if to avenge his namesake, flirts at Gray for having cloathed Delphi's barren steep with woods, and converted Meander's muddy waves into amber, as if amber did not poetically imply the same. I don't wonder with so little taste he has written no better.

I bought yesterday a poem in blank verse called Amwell, by a John Scott, Esq.; it is a pious design to immortalize a village in which John Scott Esq. lives. I only mention it for one grand and beautiful image which struck me extremely ——

> —— oft Fancy's ear
> Deep in the gloom of evening woods, has heard
> The last sad sigh of Autumn, when his throne
> To winter he resigned.——

It puts me in mind of that sublime passage in Dyer's Ruins of Rome,

hears the voice of time
Disparting towers. ——

I don't know whether you are much acquainted with my Swiss footman, David, well! he does not think there is so great a prince in the world as I. Yesterday as I came to breakfast, he told me coolly the Duke of Wirtemburg had called at eight o'clock and wanted a ticket for Strawberry Hill. Bless me, said I, and what did you say? I told his grace you was not awake, and bad him come again at ten; good God, said I, tell him to call again! don't you know he is a Sovereign Prince! No I did think he was only a common duke — I could not help laughing, though I was so shocked. In short he had called again, and had again been sent away, nor can David yet conceive that I was to be waked. I was forced to write a thousand lies and excuses, and swear I was bedrid with the gout, and could not pay my duty to his Serene Highness, and upon the whole was very glad for being reduced to plead the gout. I sent Philip to show my house, and persist in my crippletude, which in truth is still so fresh, that it would all have revived, if I must have walked or stood two hours to show his Serenity the tombs.

They are translating Shakespeare in France, and Othello is so well done, that it has incredible success. The Abbé Barthélemi, a very good judge and no partialist to England, desired Mad. du Deffand to tell me, he finds Shakespeare *superieur à tout et qu'il me*

prioit de ne regarder que le Dieu et de ne pas faire attention à l'Homme. This is a strong proof that both the Abbé and the translators understand Shakespeare, but what will they do with Falstaffe? — impossible — unless they are as able as Townley, who translated Hudibras so admirably, which before seemed the most impracticable of all atchievments.

Is not your residence nearly exhausted, and don't you intend coming southward? Am not I to harbour you? you shall be troubled with no Serene Highneses, nor have I wasted all my budget in my letters; Lady Di's drawings alone are worth a pilgrimage, — ask Mr. Palgrave who has seen them.

P. S. I have made a blunder, which will have puzzled you, I recollect it was a Dr. Chapman, not Dr. Chandler, who made so good an end by choaking himself with mackarel.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

York, April 10, 1776.

I had formed a scheme by means of an artist here to get you the exact masks in plaster of the two heads which you wanted out of our screen, which, I thought would be infinitely more satisfactory to you than any drawing, but upon examination I find no King Richard the 3rd amongst them, the sequence ends with Henry 5th, then comes Jammy, who turned out Henry the 6th

to make room for his own sweet person, and whom Time in revenge has more mutilated and pitted than any of his more antient predecessors; but I am sorry for your sake that the said Time has made very free with the mouth and chin of your friend Harry the 4th, insomuch that I hardly think any mask or drawing can be depended upon if taken from it, for there is plainly a circle about the size of a crown piece fallen off round the mouth of the Monarch. You may now see indeed where his lips were, but the shape of those lips are quite obliterated. I am sorry that I am obliged to give you so sad an account of his Majesty, but the truth is too glaring to be concealed; if after all you will have either a masque or drawing of it, I will do my best to serve you, it may perhaps serve future antiquaries to demonstrate from it that the King's evil was inherent in English Royalty from temp. Hen. Quart.

The event you talked of in the Public Advertiser has not reached York; indeed the Public Advertiser never comes to York; mercy on me, cry you, York is in the Orcades, but I can say no more only that if I have not an account of the Dutchess of Kingston's tryal every day from you, I shall die of the pip. The post is just going, yours, &c. &c.,

W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill.
Eve of St. Elizabeth of Kingston.

I will not trouble you for a cast of King Richard's

face, since there is no such thing; nor of King Henry's, since it has lost its mouth. I am grown such an antiquity myself, and have so little time left to satisfy my fancies, that I willingly contract them within as narrow a compass as I can; yet you commission me to send you journals of the Dutchess's trial, as if I was to be there! My curiosity would certainly carry me thither sooner almost than to any show upon earth. I have known her from five years old, and seen her in all her stages, but I am not well enough to attend this last act of her drama — possibly may never go to a public place again, having a strong notion of the propriety of seceding, and not trailing one's weaknesses into the world, when age and illness have told one to retire. Thus you must expect no ocular accounts from me, perhaps nothing better than the newspapers would tell you, except with a little more authenticity.

Tuesday, April 16.

The Duchess-Countess has raised my opinion of her understanding, which was always but at low ebb, for she has behaved so sensibly and with so little affectation, that her auditory are loud in applause of her. She did not once squall, scream or faint, was not impudent, nor gorgeous, looked well though pale and trembling; was drest all in black, yet in silk, not crape; with no pennon hoisted but a widows' peak. She spoke of her innocence and of her awe of so venerable an assembly; yesterday passed in the pleading of her council against a second trial, urging the

finality of the ecclesiastic sentence. I should think no more would be done to day than hearing the reply of the prosecutor's council.

A previous incident was more entertaining than any part of the piece, the *Grand Seneschal* invited the Duke of Wirtemburg to dinner by a card, and translated it neither into law Latin nor Norman French. By the help of Boyer's dictionary it began "*Le haut Intendant envoie ses compliments, &c.*" He ordered every body to be uncovered while the King's commission was reading, and then sat down himself and put on his hat.

Lord Nuneham has just been here, not attending his friend through all her course. She lay at home (or according to the chaste modern phrase, *slept* there), and the usher of black rod slept in the next room. My Journals are short, but you shall have the sequel. Adieu.

P. S. I this minute receive a letter from poor Mr. Granger's nephew to tell me his uncle was seized, at the communion table, on Sunday with an apoplectic fit, and died yesterday morning at five o'clock. He was a good man as ever lived.

2nd P. S. Thurloe, Wedderburn and Dunning have answered the Dss's. council, and then the Lords adjourned till Friday, so at soonest you will hear again by Saturday's post.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

April 20, 1776.

Your obedient Journalist proceeds. He might plead a headach; but as that is generally pleaded when not felt, a real one must not be disgraced by being turned into an excuse, especially by so sacred a minister of truth — as a newswriter.

The plot thickens, or rather opens; yesterday the judges were called on for their opinions, and *una voce* dismantled the ecclesiastic court, which has not been treated with much respect by the common law. The Attorney General then detailed the life and adventures of Elizabeth Chudleigh, alias Hervey, alias the most high and puissant Princess the Duchess of Kingston. Her Grace bore the narration with a front worthy of her exalted rank. Then was produced the capital witness, the ancient damsel who was present at her first marriage * * * * * * * To this witness the Duchess was benign, but had a transitory swoon at the mention of her dear Duke's name; and at intervals has been blooded enough to have supplied her execution if necessary. Two babes were likewise proved to have blessed her first nuptials, one of which for aught that appears may exist and become Earl of Bristol. The gallant and faithful Earl of Hilsborough used all his prowess to cross-question and brow beat the deponent, but her grace's other champion Lord Mansfield did not enter the lists. The court is now

hearing the other witnesses. I have forsworn prophecy and therefore tell you no particulars of what is to come. If I hear any thing in time this evening of the events of the day, you shall know, if not, good night.

P.S. It is near seven and the trial is not over, I must go out and learn anecdotes, and cannot come home before the post goes out; so you must have patience till next week.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Sunday, April 21, 1776.

I have an half hour to spare and employ it to continue the trial which will not be finished before Tuesday evening, when I shall certainly neither have collected the sequel, nor have time to write it, as I am to dine at the Royal Academy.

Friday and Saturday have produced so much against the Duchess Countess, that she must have been distracted to have sought the trial, or not poisoned the witnesses. The judges quashed the ecclesiatic court, as summarily as Luther could have done; and Thurloe has given an Atalantis of her Grace's adventures, confirmed by evidence. A maid has appeared who was present at her first marriage and almost at its consummation. Serjeant Hawkins has authenticated the birth of at least one child; and the widow of the parson who married her, and on whom

she forced a fictitious register, when she expected the late Lord Bristol's death, and had a mind to be a Countess, has deposed, that though privy to all these circumstances, visiting the new *Duchess,* the latter said to her "Mrs. Phillips, was not the Duke very good to marry an old maid." Both these women, her avarice had turned against her. Lord Barrington subpœnaed against her, after taking the oath, declared he would betray no confidential secrets. The Lords were going to hang him for perjury, but thought better on it, lest a quarrel between the two houses should prove favourable to America. His Lordship faltered as well as they did; told more than he had declared he would not tell, and yet prevaricated; but for this interlude you must wait for the printed trial, as I cannot relate it accurately.

To-morrow the Duchess makes her defence; and on Tuesday the Lords give sentence. She has not preserved the philosophy of the first day, but abused the first female evidence while giving testimony. Lord Mansfield left the ecclesiastical court in the lurch; his cowardice always supplanting his knavery. Adieu, you shall know the sequel by Wednesday or Thursday's post.

P. S. When does your residence conclude? and when do you come to Strawberry Hill?

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

April 23, 1776.

If you expect a long letter, you will be disappointed, if you are tired of my letters you will be released. The wisdom of the land has been exerted five days in turning a Duchess into a Countess, and does not think it a punishable crime for a Countess to convert herself into a Duchess. After a paltry defence and an oration of fifty pages, which she herself had written and pronounced well, the sages in spite of the Attorney General, who brandished a hot iron, dismissed her with the simple injunction of paying her fees; All voting her guilty, the Duke of Newcastle softening his vote with *erroneously, not intentionally.* So ends that solemn farce! which may be indifferently bound up with the State Trials and the History of Moll Flanders. If you write to her you must direct to the Countess of Bristol. The Earl they say does not intend to leave her that title, nor the House of Meadows a shilling, but there will be quæres to both designs. The ecclesiastic court full as guilty as the culprit, I dare to say, will escape as well. Adieu! allow that I have obeyed you implicitly. I am glad to have done with her.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, York, May 1, 1776.

I fear you will think me less susceptible of gratitude

than his Grace of Newcastle, and less punctilious in point of honor than Lord Viscount Barrington for not having thanked you sooner for your four exquisite Journals. I have, however, prepared something for you which I have the vanity to think will amply recompense you for your trouble, but whether you will receive it in two posts after this or not receive it at all I am not able say. I would not, however, hang you on the tenter of expectation longer than for the space of two posts, and, therefore, if you do not receive it in that time, rest in the philosophical reflection that all is for the best, and that your loss will be the public gain, which is a patriotic as well as philosophical sentiment.

In an age whose motto ought to be *squibimus docti indoctique* it is very hard you should forbid me to squib, and turn me to work in my garden. But I have obeyed you and I hope you will soon see my second book in print, if you do not see its author with it; the last sheet is now in the press. I leave York for Aston on Monday the 13th, but hope to hear from you here before I leave it. Our spiritual courtiers here say, that the sentence of their court binds the partys themselves though it does not bind other persons. Ergo B is not married to C because they were proved not to be married there, and though C has been proved to be married to B in another court, B is not married to C notwithstanding, therefore B cannot sue for a divorce, because he has not been proved in their court to be married to C. I hope you understand me right, *si quid novisti rectius, candidus imperti.*

If I come to town I shall certainly for my own happiness spend as much of my time at Strawberry as possible, but I can say nothing about my journey till I get to Aston.

I am, dear Sir,
very sincerely yours
W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, May 4, 1776.

Do you think I have a Duchess to deplume every day that you bid me write to you again already? unconscionable divine, voracious appetite! think of my poor swelled fingers that sigh after repose, think of my quivering ankles, that will carry me to no mart of news. I am here these two days smelling my lilacs, and listening to my nightingales, and leaving the wicked town to the young and healthy. I did not *utinam* that *sedes senectæ* should be my fate, that I should be able to do nothing but *sit* in my garden; but I am content hitherto, though I doubt the rest of my days will be still less comfortable; you might gild them if you would but your letter hesitates whether you shall come southward or not this summer; remember, I must not calculate without my host the gout. Well, let me see the drawing you talk of, and which yet I must wait two posts before I know whether I am to see or not. You must have a mighty opinion of my patience or

indifference, when you put it to so tantalizing a trial; be assured I have neither; neither the virtue of commanding my desires, nor the apathy that looks like commanding them. Those same desires of mine it is true, are exceedingly contracted of late years, but then I *valdè volo* what I do *volo*. My curiosity about any thing you draw or write, is augmented in proportion as it is decayed in general: my eyes are grown stronger, as my other utensils are enfeebled. They twinkle with eagerness when you tell me of your drawing, or your garden being finished.

The Countess of Bristol retired to Calais incontinently. A *ne exeat regno* came forth the night she was gone? a strange neglect in her adversaries! Don't let us talk of her any more, yes I will tell you what the droll caustic Lord Abercorn said. Somebody hoped his Lordship had not suffered by the trial; he replied, "nobody suffered by it."

They write to me from London that the provincial army, having been reinforced, had prepared to storm Boston, and had begun to canonade it, and that General Howe unable to maintain his post had withdrawn with all his forces to Halifax. I had heard this on Thursday before I came out of town, but did not believe it, for the Americans have done nothing yet that has given me a high opinion of their generalship. And that Halifax was left for Howe to retreat to is hitherto incomprehensible, not to me; for I am ignorance itself; but every body says so, and you know every body is always in the right.

Soame Jenyns has published a confirmation of the Christian religion from internal evidence. Pray was not his Origin of evil a little heterodox? I have dipped a little into this new piece, and thought I saw something like irony, but to be sure I am wrong, for the *ecclesiastical court* are quite satisfied. I must seal my letter, and leave my blue room to be seen by *Prince Yuzupoff*, who sentfor a card of admission. We have a torrent of foreigners in England, and unfortunately they are all sent hither, but then they comprehend nothing, and are gone in half an hour. I have read an account of Strawberry in a book called Londres, in which my name is Robert, my house lives at Putney, the book-cases in the library are of inlaid woods, and I have not a window but is *entirely* of painted glass; this is called seeing and describing. Adieu,

Yours ever

H. W.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

May 14, 1776.

You are not apt to express yourself unintelligibly nor I, I hope, to misunderstand you; I did not expect a drawing in colour, but with the pen, in Chiaroscuro, which I like better on some subjects than in oil. I am still sorry it is not to be in the Exhibition.

I am but this minute come to town, and know nothing but from the papers, which say every thing prospers with the Americans. As they are driving out

all the Scotch, I conclude the Duchess of Kingston will contribute another bank-note.

Do you, or do you not, ever come to town again? do not be enigmatic in a reply to this question.

Yours ever

H. W.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, May 20, 1776.

By my being here for some days I did not receive your drawing so soon as I ought to have done, nor even knew it was arrived. I thank you for it and like it excessively; you have done full justice to Gray; I am sorry he cannot see it, for it is as fine as Mr. Bentley's drawings for the rest of his odes. I admire particularly the figure of

Mista black terrific maid,

who has a masculine gait that put me in mind of old Leveridge, when he used to act Hecate in Macbeth. I hope you will draw the descent of Odin, too, which I love as much as any of Gray's works. I never was fond of the Triumphs of Owen. —

To night I have received (here in town) from Mr. Stonhewer your second Garden; it has my fullest imprimatur, I thought the beginning a little cold, but it soon rises into charming poetry, and from the 210th line is more beautiful than the first book. I like the *sheep devouring the lawn into verdure*, and from thence all is quite to my taste. *The dusty Sabbath* is admirable, but above all I am touched with the

scene of cottage children, which, is equal to any thing you ever wrote; so are the lines on their sorrow and smiles. The story of Abdolonimus finishes the whole nobly. Write away, write away and if you will not come to town — write away; yet I do wish now and then to see such a priest of Apollo. Adieu.

P. S. This was not sent so soon as it ought to have been by an accident.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, Aston, May, 28, 1776.

You are wondrous partial both to my drawing and my didactile poem, but want to hear what worse, yet, more impartial judges say to them; at present I know nothing, but dont tell me by letter, for I mean to see you speedily. I have agreed with Mr. Montague to accompany him to town next week, be assured after my arrival I shall make you a speedy visit at Strawberry, where I fancy this will find you, I mean to fly about from place to place a good deal, to make amends to my constitution for the last half year of my life, which has been very sedentary and pick-toothish. More of my schemes when we meet, at present excuse this hasty scribble, which is merely to tell you that I am coming and that I am

most truly yours

W. MASON.

I shall be to be heard of after Wednesday or Thursday at mine hosts of Curzon Street.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Curzon Street, Friday Evening, 1776.

I was ready here either to drink coffee with you to day or to dine on apple pye and cheese with you, two things that I think make a better union than many governors and preceptors do, however unfashionable it may be to think so. I am sorry you could not come, but whenever you let me know you are in town, I will take the first moment to wait on you, and to attend you to Strawberry Hill, if I can get all my necessary visits of punctilio paid before, but I find infinitely more good company left in town, than either I expected or wished.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 17, 1776.

I was exceedingly rejoiced the other day to hear by a letter from Lord Strafford that you are alive, which I doubted, I had some thoughts of looking into the Annual Register to see if your preferments were given away; but as I find you have only been in a lethargy, and that now I shall not disturb your nap, I venture to put you in mind of a person of whom you have not dreamt these four or five months. This has not been my case, though I have given you no more signs of life. I have been going to write to you fifty times, and only waited for that *small peculiar* of a letter, something to

say. I hope you have had no other reason for silence. My want is not yet removed, but though a good excuse for a letter's being short is not above half a reason for not writing at all. Swinny used to tell a story of two old companions, who sitting together one evening till it was quite dark without speaking, one called to t'other "Tom, Tom," "Well," said his friend, "what do you say;" "Oh," said t'other, "are you there;" "Aye," said the friend; "Why then don't you say *humph*," said the first; if I had been in parliament, and could have franked 'humph,' I really should have written it before now, though General Howe, who like his family never wastes a monosyllable, does not think such little amities necessary. Perhaps he reflects that even that symptom of life would not be communicated to the public, who it seems, have no business to know any thing that happens out of their own island. Master Froissart says, "By the famous wrytyng of auncient auctours all thynges ben knowen in one place or other," which is a great comfort, and the present age seems to be satisfied with what their posterity will know.

I have lately met with a famous auncient auctour, who did not think that every body ought to know every thing. He is a classic, Sir, with whom you ought to be acquainted; his very name is expressive of his vocation and science; he was called *Sir Hugh Plat*, and has written a tractate on gardening, called the *Garden of Eden*, a very proper title, for though he has planted a tree of knowledge, he forbids it to be tasted, having concealed his principal secret in a figurative description in imitation

of Baptista Porta in his natural magic, so that you might as soon understand a book of Alchemy, as Sir Hugh's treatise, at least his secret. This deep volume is not quite to your purpose, not being an essay on landscape-gardens, but rules to improve fruit and flowers, which being still more the fashionable rage at present than laying out ground, I think you would do well, Mr. Mason, to add a book on that subject. One very great secret Sir Hugh has deigned to disclose; it is a receipt for making a Peach tree bring forth Pomegranates; the process is very simple, and consists in nothing but watering (or strictly speaking milking) the Peach-tree with goat's milk for three days together.

To be sure you want to know a great deal about me myself, though you forgot you did. My whole history consists in having built a new tower, which is a vast deal higher, but very little larger in diameter than an extinguisher; however it fully answers the founder's intention, which, is to hold Lady Di's drawings. Have you done as much in your way, or any way? I could send you a paltry scurrilous letter against Shakespeare, by Voltaire, but it is not worth sending; if it did, you don't deserve it at my hands, so Adieu.

[*Enclosure.*]

LETTRE DE VOLTAIRE A M. D'ARGENTAL.

MON CHER AMI, Fernet, 19 Juillet, 1776.

J'apprends que Monsieur de St. Julien arrive dans

mon désert avec le Kain. Si la chose est vraie, j'en suis tout étonné et tout joyeux ; mais il faut que je vous dise combien je suis fâché pour l'honneur du Tripot contre un nommé Tourneur, qu'on dit Secrétaire de la Librarie, et qui ne me paroit pas le Secrétaire du bon goût. Auriez vous lû deux volumes miserables dans lesquels il veut faire regarder Shakespear comme le seul modèle de la véritable Tragedie. Il l'appelle le Dieu du Theâtre ; il sacrifie tous les François sans exception à son idole, comme on sacrifoit des Cochons à Ceres : il ne daigne pas nommer Corneille ou Racine : ces deux grands hommes sont seulement enveloppés dans la proscription générale sans que leurs noms soient prononcés : il y a dejà deux tomes d'imprimés de ce Shakespeare, qu'on prendrait pour des pièces de la Foire, faites il y a deux cents ans ; ce Maraud a trouvé le secret de faire engager le roi et la reine et toute la famille royale a souscrire à son ouvrage. Avez vous lû son abominable grimoire dont il y aura encore cinq volumes ? Avez vous une haine assez vigoureuse contre cet impudent imbecile ? Souffrirez vous l'affront qu'il fait à la France ? Vous et Monsieur de Thibouville vous êtes trop doux. Il n'y a pas en France assez de camouflets, assez de bonnets d'ânes, assez de pillorie contre un pareil facquin ? Le sang petille dans mes vieilles veines en parlant de lui. S'il ne vous a pas mis en colère, je vous tiens pour un homme impassable. Ce qu'il y a d'affreux c'est que le monstre a un parti en France, et pour comble de calamités, et d'horreur, c'est moi qui autrefois parlai le premier de ce Shakespeare ;

c'est moi qui le premier montrai aux François quelques perles que j'avois trouvés dans son enorme fumier. Je ne m'attendais pas que je servirois a fouler aux pieds les couronnes de Racine et de Corneille, pour en orner le front d'un histrion barbare.

Tachez je vous prie d'être aussi en colère que moi, sans quoi je me sens capable de faire un mauvais coup. Quand a mon ami M. le cocher Gilbert, je souhaite qu' il aille au carcan à bride abattue, etc. etc.

I have a mind to provoke you, and so I send you this silly torrent of ribaldry, may the spirit of Pope that dictated your Musæus — animate you to punish this worst of dunces, a genius turned fool with envy. I have a mind to be a dunce too and alter one line of your epitaph, the last. I think *She heard* should not be repeated twice; heard is an inharmonious word and the elision between *she* and *heard,* adds to the cacophony, I would read, —

> She heard thy Homer in her Milton's strains,
> *And* Pindar's music from the lyre of Gray.—

Or —

> " thy."

It is very impertinent in me who have no ear and am no poet to correct you, who are a musician, and a poet if ever there was one, but then, I will submit if you do not approve my emendation.

Having nothing new to read, I have been tumbling over my old books, and there I found what I had never read nor heard mentioned, and which I think has a

vast deal more of wit than the ancients used in their writings. Mind, I say used, for no doubt all times and all countries have produced men of wit, and I know Julius Cæsar had a collection of Cicero's bon mots. Diogenes Laertius too has recorded those of the philosophers, very few of which I allow to have any wit in them. The piece I mean is Seneca's *De morte Claudii Cæsaris.* There is a good deal of Greek in it, and I have forgotten my Greek, and some of my Latin too, and do not understand many passages in this satire — but let me give you an instance of great wit, speaking of his death and the astrologers, who had not foretold it rightly, he says, *horam ejus nemo novit, nemo enim illum unquam natum putavit.*

Last night, I took up Pope's letters to Mr. Digby, and finding Lady Suffolk's name, I regretted having never questioned her about the latter. This is a sort of pleasure I lose every day. I came into the world long enough ago to have informed myself from elder persons of many things I should now like to know; and there is much more satisfaction in inquiring into old stories than in telling them. Formerly I was so foolish, like most young people, as to despise them. I don't mean by this to invite the young to apply to me; I am not over fond of their company. Recollection is more agreeable than observation at the end of life. Will Dr. Johnson, and I know not most of the rest by name, interest the next age like Addison, Prior, Pope and Congreve; will General Gage or Sir Peter Parker succeed to the renown of the Duke of Marl-

borough, even had the last had no more merit than Macpherson will allow him? Oh! there is another of our authors, Macpherson! when one's pen can sink to him, it is time to seal one's letter.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, Oct. 8, 1776.

I answer your letter incontinently, because I am charmed with your idea of the cenotaph for Gray, and would not have it wait a moment for my approbation. I do not know what my lines were; for I gave them to you, or have burnt or lost them, but I am sure yours are ten times better, as any thing must naturally be when you and I write on the same subject. I prefer Westminster Abbey to Stoke, or Pembroke chapel; not because due to Gray, whose genius does not want any such distinction, but as due to Westminster Abbey, which would miss him, and to humble the French, who have never had a Homer or a Pindar, nor probably will have, since Voltaire could make nothing more like an epic poem than the Henriade, and Boileau and Rousseau have succeeded so little in odes, that the French still think that ballad-wright Quinault their best lyric poet — which shows how much they understand lyric poetry! Voltaire has lately written a letter against Shakespeare (occasioned by the new paltry translation, which still has discovered his miraculous powers), and it is as downright Billingsgate as an apple-woman

would utter if you overturned her wheelbarrow, poor old wretch! how envy disgraces the brightest talents! how Gray adored Shakespeare! Partridge the Almanack maker, perhaps, was jealous of Sir Isaac Newton. Dr. Goldsmith told me he himself envied Shakespeare, but Goldsmith was an idiot, with once or twice a fit of parts. It hurts one when a real genius like Voltaire can feel more spite than admiration, though I am persuaded that his rancour is grounded on his conscious inferiority. I wish you would lash this old scorpion a little, and teach him awe of English poets.

I can tell you nothing more than you see in the common newspapers; impatience is open-mouthed and open-eared for accounts from New York, on which the attack was to be made on the 26th of August, success there is more necessary to keep up credit than likely to do more. Should it fail, there is an end of America for England; and if it succeeds, it is at most ground for another campaign — but we chuse not to see till we feel, though they who have done the mischief, do not disguise their apprehensions. The colonies have an agent openly at Versailles, and their ships are as openly received into their ports — but I had rather talk of Caractacus, I agree that he will not suffer by not being sputtered by Barry, who has lost all his teeth. Covent Garden is rather above Drury Lane in actors, though both sets are exceedingly bad, so bad that I almost wish Caractacus was not to appear. Very seldom do I go to the play for there is no bearing such strollers. I saw Lear the last time Garrick played it, and as I told

him I was more shocked at the rest of the company than pleased with him, which I believe was not just what he desired; but to give a greater brilliancy to his own setting, he had selected the very worst performers of his troop; just as Voltaire would wish there were no better poets than Thompson and Akenside. However, as Caractacus has already been read, I do not doubt but it will succeed. It would be a horrible injury to let him be first announced by such unhallowed mouths. In truth the present taste is in general so vile, that I don't know whether it is not necessary to blunt real merit before it can be applauded.

I have not time to say more — I can say nothing about law, but that I always avoid it if I can, that and every thing else wants reformation, and I believe we shall have it from that only reformer, Adversity. I wish I were with you and the good *Palsgrave* and I always wish you was with me. Adieu,

yours ever

H. W.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Feb. 17, 1777.

I do not know whether you will value the execution of a promise, when the letter is observed and not the spirit. I write only because you desired it, and that I said I would; neither the litterary nor political world furnish much matter. I have read the Goat's

beard — the lines on Charles II are very good, and there is true humour here and there: but the humour is often missed, and I think the whole much too long — it is far interior to *Variety*. Mr. Tyrrwhit has at last published the Bristol poems. He does not give up the antiquity, yet fairly leaves everybody to ascribe them to Chatterton if they please, which I think the internal evidence must force every one to do, unless the amazing prodigy of Chatterton's producing them should not seem a larger miracle than Rowley's and Canning's anticipation of the style of very modern poetry. Psalmanazaar alone seems to have surpassed the genius of Chatterton, and when that lad could perform such feats, as he certainly did, what difficulty is there in believing that Macpherson forged the cold skeleton of an epic poem, that is more insipid than Leonidas. Mr. Tyrrwhit seems to have dreaded drawing himself into a controversy, which joys me, who dreaded being drawn into one too.

The news from America are as usual, difficult to be fathomed; the court denies being certain of the discomfit of the Hessians, yet their runners pretend that the Hessian prisoners have been retaken. It is fact that the royalists have neither yet taken Providence nor the Americans ships; the other side believe that Lord Cornwallis has received a check at the Jersey's. Lee is certainly taken by the poltroonery of his own men, of whom he had eighteen to Col. Harcourt's fourteen. He has written a short letter in which he himself says so, and adds, that he submits to his fate,

only regretting that liberty will no longer enjoy a foot of earth.

The Habeas Corpus bill you see has appeared, though nobody would believe it. Lord Rockingham and his ingenious band have contrived to make a more ridiculous figure by doing nothing, than they ever did by any thing they attempted. They are sure of not being taken up during the suspension on the suspicion of a plot. You have seen in the papers, I suppose, that John the painter is a Scot, and that he dated the conflagration at Bristol from an American merchant's house, and committed a burglary, which it is not even pretended to have been directed by the orders of the congress.

The Landgrave of Hesse on the strength of our subsidy is gone to Rome, to make a solemn renunciation of the protestant religion at the feet of the Pope,— who ought to declare him vice defender of the Faith against the heretics and quakers of Philadelphia.

Mr. Palgrave is in town, and so is a third inundation of snow, yet I have gone about these three weeks and had no return of my disorder. Give me as good an account of yourself.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Feb. 27, 1777.

I was very wise in never advertizing retirement. I knew well how difficult it is to quit the world, and yet

have done with it. The love of fame has its colts-tooth as well as old ladies. Alas! my good friend, heroes, philosophers, statesmen, have their itchings left, though their all needs have been fully satisfied. Poor Mr. Garrick labours under this infirmity of age; he has complained of Monsr. Le Texier for thinking of bringing over Caillaud the French actor in the opera comique, as a mortal prejudice to his reputation; and no doubt would be glad of an act of parliament that should prohibit there ever being a good actor again in any country or century; but this is not all, he has solicited King George to solicit him to read a play. The piece was quite new, Lethe, which their Majesties have not seen above ten times every year for the last ten years. He added three new characters equally novel, as a Lady Featherby, because the queen dislikes feathers. The piece was introduced by a prologue *en Fable*; a blackbird grown grey-haired, as blackbirds are wont to do, had retired from the world, but was called out again by the Eagle. Mr. Hare asked Garrick, if his Majesty looked very like an Eagle? The audience was composed of King, Queen, Princess Royal, Duchess of Argyll, Lady Egremont, Lady Charlotte Finch; the Prince of Wales was not present; and all went off perfectly ill, with no exclamations of applause and two or three formal compliments at the end. Bayes is dying of chagrin, and swears he will read no more.

My second moral example is in higher life. That old ruinous fragment of Faction, Lord Temple, has had an aching gum too; become by his separation from Lord

Chatham, and by the death of his brother George, too insignificant and too impotent to overturn, awe or even alarm the administration, he has been attempting to wriggle into a little favour by a mongrel, mixture of treachery, spying and *informing*, below a gentleman, and even below any Lord, but one. Affecting to be shocked at the attempt on Bristol, he employed one of his own old incendaries to resort to the prison where John the painter lies, and his worthy agent by worming himself into that man's confidence, pretends to have learnt from him that the said John had received £300 from Silas Deane for the purpose of burning, not only Bristol, Portsmouth, and Plymouth, but the Bank of England, for stone and gold are wonderfully combustible. The natural philosophers in power believe that Dr. Franklin has invented a machine of the size of a tooth-pick case, and materials, that would reduce St. Pauls to a handful of ashes. I know a very pious Seigneur that firmly believes in this revival of the nostrum of the old man of the mountain — though I do not think he would like this destructibility of gold, if he did believe in it.

The capture of the Hessians is confirmed with circumstances somewhat untoward, for they were not surprised, and yet all laid down their arms as if they liked lands in America, better than the wretched pittance they are to receive out of the Landgrave's dole.

It is now the fashion to cry up the manœuvre of General Washington in this action, who has beaten two English regiments too, and obliged General Howe

to contract his quarters — in short the campaign has by no means been wound up to content.

There is a great breach in the house of Holderness. Dayrolle's daughter has eloped to Leonidas Glover's youngest son, who is friend of Lord Carmarthen: Lady Carmarthen has harboured, and the Countess her mother has forbidden the daughter her court. This is my second letter; Mem. I have not had a line from you.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

March 13, 1777.

So you think I have always something to say because I live in London? If I have, I am sure novelty does not constitute my cargo; the present world seems composed of forgery and informers, and the peers dignify the latter list, and may perhaps the former: I am not ambitious of being their historian. One Dignam, a candidate for the borough of Hindon, and parliament, had given information of a plot against the King's life, which he had invented, and it neither producing a place for him nor Lord Temple, he took to selling places to others, which all his merit could not obtain for himself, and so he is only in Newgate. This is a specimen of town-news; it is better to be at York, than write memoirs of Mrs. Grieve, Mrs. Rudd, Dr. Dodd, Mr. Dignam and Lord Temple.

Hume's life written by himself is just published. It

is a nothing, a brief account of his disappointments on his irreligious works making no noise at first, and his historic making some. He boasts that in the latter he dared to revive the cause of despotism — a great honour truly to a philosopher, and he speaks of your friend Bishop Hurd with a freedom, that I dare to say the whole court will profess to his lordship they think monstrous rudeness. My Lord H. whose piety could swallow Hume's infidelity, will be shocked now that he should have employed such a brute.

The memoirs and miscellaneous works of Lord Chesterfield are come out too; they are in two huge quartos, drawn up by Dr. Maty and his son, and compiled chiefly from pamphlets. I am got but a little way into them with small edification, yet I have found a new anecdote or two, that are curious, and there are some of his bon mots that will be new to others. In the second volume are several of his French letters to a Madame de Monconseil, whom I know; she was married to a French officer, and when I was first recommended to her above thirty years ago, her mother kept a gaming house, and the daughter has ever since dealt in intrigues of all sorts, which latterly, you may be sure, have been chiefly political; and of both sorts I believe interest was generally the motive. Towards the end of the Duke of Choiseul's power, her house was the rendezvous of all his enemies; I have seen Madame de Mirepoix there with Marshal Richelieu, whom, till faction reunited them, she would never be in a room with (but at court) as he killed her first husband. She married

her nephew to Madame de Monconseil's daughter, and that made a quarrel between Mad. de Mirepoix and the prime minister, and was the true cause of his fall; for the Princess de Beauvau, her sister in law and enemy, to hurt Mad. de Mirepoix, drove the Dutchess de Grammont into all the violence against Madame du Barry, and the Duke was so weak as to let those two women embroil him with the mistress. I was an eye witness of those scenes, and at the Duke's three or four nights in a week, and heard all their indiscretions.

There are I see besides, a letter or two to Madame de Tençin, a most horrid woman, sister of the Cardinal. She had great parts and so little principle that she was supposed to have murdered and robbed one of her lovers, a scrape out of which Ld. Harrington, another of them, saved her; she had levées from eight in the morning till night, from the lowest Tools to the highest. Dalembert was her natural son, Madame Geoffrin her pupil, and Pontdevesle her nephew, who was supposed to have only adopted her novels, the Comte de Cominges, and the memoires de Philippe Auguste.. This acquaintance with the personages, English and French, makes me eager about these memoirs, and as I love nothing so much now as writing notes in my books, this will furnish me with employment.

I am extremely of your opinion about the new old poems; indeed you talk *en connoissance de cause*, who can dispute with the author of the monody? As I already have *your garden* I am less interested about its publication; I almost grudge the swine your pearls; yet

write the third and the fourth, and sometimes to me, for I must be encouraged, or I cannot write even newspapers. There is nothing pleases me so much as humbling myself to the level of my talents. Writing notes in my books, as it requires only truth and memory, and no parts, suits me exactly; and had I always known myself as well as I do now, I should never have soared out of my sphere, and my works would have been highly valued, as I should have never had above one reader to each, the person who buys my books at my auction. Don't tell me you have nothing to say; you see how easy it is to make a long letter; one might have written this in the Isle of Sky, but you are a poet and a tragic author, and will not condescend to write any thing lest your letters should rise in judgment against you. It is a mercy to have no character to maintain. Your predecessor Mr. Pope laboured his letters as much as the Essay on Man, and as they were written to every body, they do not look as if they had been written to any body; however as I expect to be indemnified for your silence, I will consent to send you three letters for one, provided you give me a satisfactory account hereafter of your having been better employed than in answering mine! I certainly shall do nothing better than writing to you, and therefore whenever I have anything worth telling you, you shall hear it, and I shall not consider whether it is worth posterity's knowing or not, — posterity must deserve my favour a little better than their ances-

tors now living, or I shall care a straw for their suffrage.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, March 28, 1777.

I have been here these six days alone, enjoying the bounty of March, which has laid aside its old dry winds and behaved with a warmth, a heat that June seldom condescends to bestow. I have had every door and window all day open for these three days, and in the garden the sun was even too hot. I wonder that in this pious age there is no fear of an earthquake, and that my Lord of London has not threatened us with one in his pastoral letter on Good Friday! I left the town in a buzz about Lord Pigot's arrest, in which the Scots are said to have acted an ungentle part, nay one of guile, if they could be suspected of any unfair dealings. We have fancied that this little isle could hold both the east and the west *in commendam*, and supply the places of Montezuma and Aurenzebe. I doubt France will soon present to both those cures of souls. Caius Manlius Washingtonius Americanus, the dictator, has got together a large army, larger than that our ally the Duke of Wirtemburg was to have sold us, and General Howe who has nothing but salt provisions in our metropolis, New York, has not twenty thousand pounds worth of pickles as he had at Boston; but I do not understand military matters, and therefore

will say no more of them. Have you read Hume's life, and did you observe that he thought of retiring to France and changing his name, because his works had not got him a name. Lord Bute called himself Sir John Stewart in Italy to shroud the beams of a title too gorgeous; but it is new to conceal a name that nobody had heard of. Have you got Lord Chesterfield? I have read his letters and like them, but Dr. Maty is no *Mason* at biography; you will be charmed with his *Common senses* and *Fogs*, if you never read them, and with his *Worlds*, which you have read. They are the best of his works. Mr. Jephson has sent me his Vitellia, which Garrick rejected last year with as much judgment as he acted all the wretched pieces that appeared at Drury lane for so many years; it has beautiful poetry as Braganza had, and more action and more opportunities for good actors, if there were any.

This is my second since my promise of three, of which I repent already as I have no satisfaction in writing but to hear from you; but I can make all three as short as I please, for the spirit and the letter of a promise are two very different things, vide Sanchez, Escobar, Mansfield, and other casuists on coronation oaths.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, April 5, 1777.

Young folks may fancy what they will of such antiques as I am, having no original pleasures, or only scraps and ends. Lord Holland was always whining on the miseries of old age, now I can tell both the one and the other, that there are very cordial enjoyments, which only the old can have. I have just tasted two great raptures of the sort I mean,—but indeed they do not happen very often. The transports I allude to, are living to see the *private* works, sentiments and anecdotes of one's own time come to light. The two last folios of Lord Chesterfield delighted me upon that score, but there is still a fresher work of the same kind, and by far one of the most curious and authentic that ever was published. It is a history of many interesting parts of the latter end of Louis quatorze, of the Regent, and of the late King of France, taken from an immense collection of state papers amassed by the two last Marechaux de Noailles, furnished by the family, and though of dates so recent, and though published at Paris, written with a freedom and impartiality that are stupendous. I will give you an instance that is striking; one of the Marechals congratulates Louis on the taking of Namur, and says it is a conquest that he alone could atchieve. King William, says the author, took it with much more deserved applause two years afterwards. There are six duodecimos, pretty

thick; the first relates chiefly to the persecution of the protestants on the revocation of the edict of Nantes: is severe on the King, but unsatisfactory, because the Marshal being recalled, the author follows him and not the war, and this is almost the only kind of fault I find in the work, which ought to have been called memoirs of the two marshals, instead of memoirs of two reigns. But the invaluable part, and that pretty perfect, is the genuine and secret history of Spain on the establishment of Philip V. Nothing ever was more curious — you will even see the pains Louis XIV took to persuade his grandson to give up Spain and content himself with Sardinia, and you cannot doubt it. The two last volumes are not less interesting to me, who have the very minute of time before my eyes. I remember how I trembled, as Lord Chesterfield did (for these memoirs are the counterpart of his) just before the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, and yet you will see that the court of France was in as great a panic as we had reason to be. I remember saying often, that a little thing saved us as ruined us, and that if France had not as incapable ministers as we had, we must be undone. Perhaps, when more memoirs of the Family of Noailles appear, somebody or other will make this reflection again.

The second Marshal had (luckily for posterity, though probably a little wearisome at the time) a rage of drawing up memorials; but he was a good and a prudent man; and the latter quality made his courage a little doubted, as the author fairly owns. I remem-

ber a *bon mot* of his son, the present Marshal, on that topic. The old gentleman had like to have been drowned by going in a boat on the water; his son, the Duc d'Ayen, a great bonmotist, scolded the servants for not hindering his father, and said, "*ne scavez-vous pas que mon père craint l'eau comme le feu.*"

You cannot conceive the avidity with which I devoured these volumes; one cannot be more vigourous at eighteen, but alas! one cannot go to Drury Lane and pick up two Noailles's every night! It is vexatious too, that as these papers will spread the taste of hoarding state papers, (which the old marshal had retained from the taste of memoir writing that was rife in his youth) I shall not live to see those collections. We are indeed likely to have an immense collection ere long, but not quite so important. It seems by a note of Dr. Maty, that Lord Chesterfield, who I thought had used him only as a butt to shoot wit at, had kept up a correspondence with long Sir Thomas Robinson for fifty years. Well; Sir Thomas is dead too; and lest the public should sigh for his answers, as they did for Madame de Grignan's, he was so industrious as to keep copies of his, nay, he had preserved every letter he ever received, nay, and he had kept copies of all his answers to all them too; and he has left all, letters and answers, to the Roman people; that is, to an apothecary who married his natural daughter, with injunctions to publish all, which will last me my life. Oh, but stay, the Primate of Ireland, Sir Thomas's brother, is not quite so indulgent as the House of

Noailles, who have suffered a letter of a bishop, their uncle, who teazes the Marsha. for promotion, to be published. My Lord of Armagh is consulting lawyers whether he cannot stop the publication, and in truth it is an abominable thing that private letters of living persons should be printed.

I do not know a tittle of what has happened in Europe (or America) since Lord Chesterfield and Monsieur de Noailles died, but I shall go to town on Monday, recollect the living, and tell you what they have been doing; but then you must take care to answer this, which is *the third*, or if Lord Temple should find a plot in a meal tub or a flower-pot, I shall not be able to tell you till I am empowered to write a first letter.

8th, Lond.

The Bishop of London is dead, and Mlle Khrome. I thought your friend Dr. Hurd would have succeeded them both. The message for the debts and civil list is to be delivered to morrow. Somebody knocks, and I must finish.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

York, April 14, 1777.

Shame upon me, I have indeed now three unanswered letters of yours, and such letters too as every one of them deserved three answers a piece for the entertain-

ment which they severally afforded, but if these nine letters were all of them written from this place and in my present monotonous situation they would I am convinced not make one equal sufficient answer or be deemed fair and full payment by any person conversant in the course of epistolary exchange, so I must content myself with resting in a state of insolvency and continuing your poor debtor to the end of my residentiarial days, if not to the end of my natural life. But pray (say you) Mr. Residentiary what is a monotonous situation? is it not a phrase similar to a spontaneous coat which puzzled a wit at Whites so much that in order to get rid of it he laid a bett that there was no such word as spontaneous in Johnson's Dictionary! No Sir, I assure you there is the strictest propriety in the epithet, for my hours are all regulated by a certain tinkling monotonous machine called the Minster prayer bell which even now (while I am writing) begins to move its clapper and will hardly let me finish my sentence, with an adieu to you till I have obeyed its summons and have gone to my matins. * * *

And now Sir my matins are finished and I resume my pen, but the singing boys have bauld so horridly out of tune that I have lost all the good temper I was possessed of after my breakfast when I first sat down to write to you. And this is every day the case, and as the Post goes off every day at noon, every letter I attempt to write is liable to the same mischance, so that nothing *suivie* nothing that your critics would call a

composition can possibly fall from my pen. Well, reply you, but are my letters compositions? No! but they are better than compositions, and therefore when a man cannot write such better things than compositions, he must either compose or not write at all, Q. E. D.

I saw lately in a review, the only species of literary beings (and you will allow them to be of the true Drury Lane stamp) on which one can here be vigorous, an account of a work of Marmontel's called I think Les Incas which seemed to be a sort of historical novel on the conquest of Peru, — perhaps it might give one some hint for a drama similar to that which you once recommended to me. Marmontel is no favourite writer of mine, but he has invention, and sometimes traits of character. Have you seen the work and is it worth sending for to town? I could get it perhaps in a fortnight if the waggoner pleases.

O! for the muse of Lord Lyttleton or of Mr. Montague that I might finish the imperfect dialogue which David Hume has left us between himself and Charon, and O! for the dedicatorial powers of Sir John Hawkins that I might dedicate it either to the King or my Lord Hertford.

A friend of mine here who is an excellent scholar has examined Pliny with the greatest accuracy concerning all he has left relative to encaustic painting, and gone much further than Count Caylus or any French scholar, I believe could possibly do, on such a subject; in short he has found out the precise colours and mode of operation which Protogenes used, and from

the single specimen he has produced has made it very clear to me that the art is capable of being carried to absolute perfection, and is equally excellent for its simplicity, and promise of durability, and I have reason to think that as the tints employed are fixt and permanent, pictures might be copied in this way, by persons no better skilled in drawing than the workmen in mosaic at Rome, or the tapistry weavers at the Gobelins. And now, Sir, by the time this reaches you, the Budget will be opened, the increase of the civil list moved for, and every thing that can make the felicity of this nation as permanent as the most genuine encaustic painting secured to us and our posterity. Let me not I beseech you owe all my intelligence of these blessed events to a newspaper. But indulge me (*pro more*) with a speedy account from your own pen, to which I will give no other epithet than that it is to me a most charitable pen, and shall have my prayers for its preservation both at matins and vespers, good creature as it is

Amen.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

April 18, 1777.

I have *seen* but not read one syllable of Marmontel's Yncas, nor ever will. History is romance enough, without purposely perverting it. I could not wade through a quarter of his Belisarius. I hope the Peru-

vians will have better masters to teach them liberty than French *philosophes*, and not be obliged to go to Paris on their way to Thermopylæ. However, as you can strike fire from a flint, I am disposed to send you the book, and shall be delighted if you beget a Pandora on a cloud.

It is easy to me to believe your friend's discoveries in encaustic. Muntz went far enough to prove the facility, use and durability, but not far enough to get the method adopted; not from any defect or difficulty in the practice, but from the stupidity and obstinacy and John-trot-plodding-in-the-same-wayness of the Professors. If you think, because it talks more of the arts, that the age is grown more sensible and docile, I shall not agree with you. In truth, I have made up my mind in a superb contempt of every thing present, not because I am old and prefer the days of my youth; I go much further back. Except yours, which can produce adamants that will resist time and live to be dug up in a brighter century, I am for totally discouraging genius. The soil in which it could shoot and flourish vigourously is worn out, at least in this island. It is a reprobated land in every sense, and if I were twenty years younger, I would seek a wiser country; for there is a joy in looking up to great men and admiring them; there is none to a generous mind in looking down on any body, much less on all and without any of the pride of virtue. I trust one may, without vanity, despise a world that respects nothing but gold, whether to hoard or squander. The contempt of money is no more a

virtue than to wash one's hands is one; but one does not willingly shake hands with a man that never washes his.

Lord Chesterfield's Characters are published, and are not even prettily written, as might have been expected. They are not so much as terse and quaint, which would not indeed have made them better, but they are even vulgar and ill expressed; one would think he did not knew the personages well with whom he had been so conversant. This is not from prejudice that I speak, for my father's is tolerably impartial, and in some parts just, yet as it was preserved by his Lordship, so many years after the confutation was notorious, it shows old prejudice to tax him with having sacrificed every thing to the purpose of making a great fortune. He was born to £2500 a year, left a nominal estate of £8000, and died fifty thousand in debt. Tom Windham was more ingenuous, even though in opposition, and in the height of the clamour; going to see Longleat, built by Sir John Thynne, steward to the protector Somerset, and the man who showed the house (which by the way is a town in comparison) saying, "it is a large house, but we don't pretend that it rivals Houghton," Windham replied, "No — yet I believe Mr. Jenkins (my father's steward) has not built such an one." The character of the Queen is equally unjust: avarice was by no means her failing. Lord Hardwicke is as ridiculously exalted. More, Bacon, Clarendon were nothing to that mirrour of magistrates; you would think that Lord Chatham could have out-reasoned Lord Mansfield,

as easily as his thunder shook that aspin leaf. I do not recommend to your friend to copy these portraits in encaustic.

There is another scurrilous poem by the author of the *Diabboliad*, it is particularly hurled at the heads of the Hertfords. The writer is supposed to be a Captain Coombes, whose title to the office of Censor general, is having been guilty of forgery; and to be executioner, to having married a common woman, who was kept by Lord Beauchamp. Are not we an exemplary people?

The payment of the King's debts was gratefully accorded yesterday by those who had contributed to cause his necessities. Charles Fox made a great figure in behalf of Ld. John's motion for a committee. The latter apologized for the secession of his friends, on their finding they could do no good. Wilkes made a panegyric on the real King of France for his tenderness to his brothers, unlike the gloomy tyrant — and then he paused — Louis the eleventh. In the Lords, Lord Rockingham and the Duke of Grafton differed on one motion, and agreed on another. I know nothing of the budget, but I am charmed with a new mode of government, which every body else laughs at; I mean the decision of the directors of the East India Company, by tossing up heads and tails, whether Lord Pigot should be a prisoner or a nabob. If every nation was to be ruled by this compendious and impartial method, the people would on every occasion have an equal chance for happiness from every measure; and I beg

to know where it is not three to one against them by every other mode. I would be content to live under the most despotic monarchy that could be devized, provided King Heads and Tails were the sovereign.

You wonder I say nothing on your second garden. No you don't. It is not upon any of the topics of the week, and the silent few that read from taste, come seldom in my way, who live half the week stark alone at Strawberry, and the rest of it with folks whose reading is the last thing I desire to hear them talk of; yet they do talk of it, for it is the Morning Post. Lord Nuncham indeed told me to night that a Lord of his acquaintance had taken your garden for Gray's and did not like it. We were both very glad of both, and I am sure you agree with us. Adieu.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

York, 1777.

Though I have had the pleasure of receiving three letters from you, I have not been so long in your debt as you may imagine, for two of them travelled about the county as your letters usually do, and by being misdirected saw Wakefield, Rotherham, Aston, &c., before they reached me at York; where I have now been two months, and must stay another before I am released from presiding over the diurnal devotions of

decayed tradesmen and card playing old gentlewomen. I beg their pardon for not giving these latter the precedence in my period, they would pull my surplice over my head, and uncover my shame if they knew it. So much for apology (if it can be called by that name) let me now thank you, which I do most cordially for the great entertainment those letters have given me, because they treat precisely of those very topics which I cannot learn here, and which of all others I love to have news about, continue them I beseech you for sweet Saint Charity. I assure you my situation here in point of literary matters is just as awkward as if I had lived in the 12th century when all the books in Oxford, as Mr. Warton says, were contained in a few chests in St. Mary's Church, 'tis true however if I subscribe my half-crown a quarter to the bookseller, I can read all the Jemmy Jessamies that come out, and at the middle of a month can have the high treat of that Review which was published on the first day of it. But this is the utmost York affords me. Yet by writing to Stonhewer, I did get Tom Warton down by the coach in due time, but have yet only had time to get through his two preliminary dissertations, and to own the truth, thought it more like wading than reading, but I intend to wade on whenever opportunity offers. If I had really that Papistical supremacy over letters that I once pretended to have to Mr. Jerningham, I would prohibit every body from studying antiquities except those very few that had from nature more wit than they knew what to do with. I think when you

was young, you were one of this class, and therefore you would have escaped my prohibition.

I know not whether this be a compliment to you or not, however, I mean to say that your Antiquarian studies have done you (and you only of all I know), more good than harm; they have left you with as much of your wits about you as any man ought to be trusted with, and I dare say (if you would own it) you find those wits more tractable and manageable now, than before you was an antiquarian. I doubt when I have gone through the huge quarto now before me, I shall not judge thus favourably of what antiquities have done to its author. I am already much displeased at what he says about the works of Ossian. He does not seem by any means to believe them genuine, and yet either his rage for antiquity or his fear of Macpherson makes him pretend to think them so, and yet in so weakly a way does he say the little he does in their defence, that he will rather heighten the suspicion against them. By the way I have been very petulant and pert in some of my notes on this subject to a few of Mr. Gray's letters, and expect not only to have Macpherson himself, but all the Macs in Scotland upon my back. I had an opportunity of sending by a private hand (only the other day) the greatest part of my fourth section to Mr. Stonhewer, from whom you may have a sight of it whenever you please. You will there read 40 letters and the 20 more which complete the section are now in the press, and I shall send them to him as they come from it, two sheets more will go by this post. I am in no

haste about publication, and for the same reason that you withhold your last volume of Anecdotes from the world. I am certain my notes &c. will create me many enemies; and yet for my life I cannot help writing what I think the truth. Pray is the study of antiquities as useful towards checking a redundancy of truth as of wit? if so, I think that I too must commence antiquarian.

They tell me that my name has been mentioned in the House of Commons about literary property, and that it was said, "I did not think it worth my while now to print the work I had in hand." I certainly never said this; I believe I might say that it would be well for me to wait and see whether any thing would be done to secure one's property. The truth is, as you know, that I wish to make the publication lucrative, and for what I think a good purpose. Now, as it was difficult to do this before the Lords' decision, it is ten times more difficult to do it now; for what way have the booksellers now left to make themselves atonement for their loss of copyright, but the easy and effectual way of pirating saleable books? I verily believe they did this before the decision, and therefore I am sure they will do it now. One way that I thought of preventing this was by means of the head you saw, which I thought they could not so easily pirate, and whether I use this or no, I mean to write my name in every copy, for which I have the respectable authorities of Churchill and Tristram Shandy. It does not appear to me that the case of authors, *i. e.* of those few writers who like

me have published by means of a bookseller, and have yet reserved their right of copy in themselves has ever yet been considered in either of the debates, at present, I have lost all right and title in all my own things, merely because my bookseller neglected to enter them in Stationer's Hall. But enough, more than enough on so dull a subject.

I saw, near three weeks ago, the advertisement of a Familiar Epistle to the Author of the Heroic Epistle and Postscript; if it had been good for any thing I imagine you would have mentioned it, as you know I liked those publications. Is not their author yet found out?

I will say nothing of my meditated visit to you and a very few other friends in town and its environs till I hear from my curate, Mr. Alderson, who is now at Syon Hill, and who will soon give an account not only of his lordship's present state of health, but his intended motions. If either a journey to Bath or Yorkshire, leaves me the Middlesex coast clear, I shall seize on that moment to visit you; for with this view I keep myself quite disengaged after I am free from my present confinement, which ends the 11th of next month, till which time I beg you to remember that I am at York and nowhere but at York. Believe me to be, with the most perfect respect, dear Sir,

yours very sincerely

W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, May 2, 1777.

I ask Mr. Fraser to send you the Incas: I wish they may produce a thousand fold.

You must not expect news nor any thing from me. I have been again involved in a sea of troubles; my nephew Lord Orford is relapsed and I have passed the last ten days between the inn at Barton Mills, and the hovel where he is five miles thence. He is so far come to himself, that when he will speak, which is only in a whisper, his answers are rational. I will not tire you with the variety of my distresses which are manifold; doctors, lawyers, stewards, rogues and relations, take up my whole time. I stole one day to walk through and dine with old Cole; I sighed to take the vows at the former. I think I could pass my last days there with great comfort. King's chapel is more beautiful than Strawberry Hill. A bookish monk is a happy being, he is neither disposed to laugh, nor to feel, and scarce knows that the other two divisions are fools and villains. Adieu.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

York, May 12, 1777.

I had heard of the melancholy account of your nephew's relapse only a day or two before I received

your last favour, dated on the second, with the Incas, which I am obliged to you for and will take care to return safely at some convenient opportunity. But as I received them only yesterday, cannot look into them till I get to Aston, where I hope to be next Saturday, after taking a tour eastward to look after some *improved* farms of mine which grow no corn, and on which my tenants break, and which keep exact pace with all other improvements in this improving age of ours. Your journey to Barton Mills, melancholy as it must have been, and which I sincerely condole with you, for the cause of, could hardly be more comfortless than mine which I am about to take, but *parlons d'autres choses.* I have found out an empty gothic shrine in a conspicuous part of the Minster, which, on measurement, will exactly fit William de Hatfield, in which I mean to place him (the Dean willing) at my next residence. But I must do it, at my own expence, I suspect; for though we have received five marks a year ever since the Reformation for not praying for the said William's soul, I do not think we shall be grateful enough to his alabaster body to place him in the said shrine, by expence of Chapter. However I think I can achieve this work for three or four guineas, and if you will go halves with me, and write an inscription in right good classical-gotho Latin, you shall be heartily welcome. I think we cannot get or secure fame for our joint love of dead princes at a cheaper rate than by this restoration of the said Prince William. You must send me also an exact blazon of his arms, which my

encaustic friend, who goes on very prosperously, has promised to encausticate gratis.

I am so over head and ears in epistolary debts that I must apply to my correspondents to pay them, and as I can safely say they brought me into this debt they cannot in conscience refuse the grant. You stand highest creditor in this letter-list, and therefore my first application is to you. We expect and demand therefore that you take this short and dull scrawl for full payment of all the long and most entertaining letters we have received from you during our precentorial residence, and we promise to be more economical when we are found at Aston near Rotherham, where please to remember we are forthwith going and so we heartily bid you

farewell.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, May 26, 1777.

I found your obliging letter of the 16th when I returned hither out of the east-riding, inclosed in the supplement to David Hume's Life which came safe and speedily by the Leeds coach, but how you came to find out that mode of conveyance puzzles me, 'tis however a very good one and drops any parcel at my door most conveniently and therefore occasionally it may be a safer conveyance than the post. This same supplement I suspect is written by Murray,

a Scotch Bookseller with whom I have a chancery suit at present on account of his pirating Gray's poems. About a fortnight ago he sent me a printed letter which he said, in a M.S. letter which accompanied it that he should publish on the 21st instant, but sent me it before, "that he might not treat me with ill manners." I suppose therefore the letter is now published, and I hope you have either read it, or will read it immediately. I have nothing to say to it, but that I have got by it what Job wished for, when he said "Oh that my adversary had written a book, surely I would take it upon my shoulder and bind it as a crown to me," for the abuse is so gross and illiberal that I think it will tend greatly to give a right issue to the cause, and lead to the end for which I first instituted it, which you know was to procure an act in favour of authors, and prevent the piracy of booksellers. You will say I know that in times like these when there is no author fit to be read that cares whether his works be pirated or no, it is little worth while to aim at such a thing but perhaps it may benefit posterity — and on that perhaps I mean to proceed.

I have waded though almost a volume of the Incas but it was pain and grief to me. Your French philosophes think it incumbent upon them to turn preachers themselves after they think they have demolished preaching. But they turn out the dullest *proneurs* in the world, insomuch that I should not wonder if a fine French Belle Esprit laid down her Dide-

rot or her Marmontel and took up old Père Bourdaloue merely *pour sa desennuier*. I am sure I can read my friend Jeremy Taylor with great contentation after the most eloquent of them.

You must not expect the great honor of re-enshrining (not the bones) but the Alabaster figure of William of Hatfield unless you will share it with me and join your name to mine on the occasion. But as nothing can be done in this matter till my next residence, I hope to talk the thing over with you in London before that time. I hear our archbishop has preached a fine tory rory sermon about propagating the gospel and seems inclined rather to propagate popery than presbyterianism but I can not get a sight of it though I writ a month ago to Montagu to send it to me. This is unlucky, because as I am catechizing my parish in order to prepare them for his Grace's confirmation, I ought to learn the proper way of expounding to them what is meant by that Spiritual Grace which his Archiepiscopal palm is to convey to them — I suppose Burke's Pamphlet is made out of the paper which he drew up in the beginning of last winter for the use of his friends in the minority, and which they had not the courage to make use of. I had a sight of it, and thought it in many parts excellently written. I have no chance of seeing it till the Parliament breaks up and Mr. Montagu returns into my neighbourhood.

I am anxious to have better accounts of Lord Orford for your sake, but would not wish you till then to pain yourself on so melancholy a subject. Believe that I in-

terest myself most cordially in your concerns, and that I am, dear Sir, most truly yours

W. MASON.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, June 21, 1777.

I found your favour of the 10th with the *Gazettes Litteraires* (for both which many thanks) at Sheffield on the 18th inst., after I had taken my leave of my diocesan at his visitation, who was then setting out for Wentworth Castle on the invitation of its noble owner. Except from him and the Duke of Newcastle, I do not find he has received any civility hitherto on his progress; I indeed, the day before, treated him with a stinking turbot at Aston; but I and my stinking turbot are nothing. The papers will tell you how he pufft his predecessor, Robin Goodfellow, in his charge, and except this which gave great offence to everybody who knew Robin's real character, that is to say, the whole body of the clergy who heard him, save one unprovided-for chaplain, who wept bitterly; except this, I say, all other matters went off quietly and dully enough in conscience. Though naturally very ungracious in his manner, dry, reserved and absent, he put on his most benign aspect to your humble servant, and invited both me and my portmanteau to Bishopthorpe, which I returned with two bows, one for my portmanteau and another for myself. I feel no little comfort in finding

His Grace now northward of me, for almost all my time the fortnight before was taken up in parochial preparations, such as making out terriers, catechising children, writing them out confirmation tickets, &c. &c. preaching on the subject, &c. &c., all which you have no conception of, and would think it if you had, my curate's business. Yet I had my reasons for taking it upon myself as much as possible on the present occasion; nevertheless, I have done something else; "are you avised of that?" as Mrs. Quickly says; no; but I trust you will ere long. But the conveyance, though safe, is so uncertain in point of time, witness, your *Gazettes Litteraires* (which ought to have been dropt at my door five days before I found them ten miles off at Sheffield) that I shall find another method of giving you a sight of the drawings to which I allude, therefore you must wait with patience till they arrive. I must tell you one speech which I made to His Grace, as I have no speeches of other folks to send you. He praised my house and said it must have cost me a good deal of money. I said it did, and perhaps I was imprudent to lay out so much, but it gave me consolation to think I had by doing so, made a pretty adequate return to Lord H. for his patronage, especially as the living was retained in the family, and as to the situation I thought it so pleasant that a man might very well preserve his independency in it, the only thing which I thought worth preserving. His Grace was silent, but whether his silence gave consent to the opinion I pretend not to determine.

I will add no more till you receive my drawings, which as they are done in a pretty free way will I hope please you well enough to excuse my writing you a longer letter. I do not expect you to put them up in the Beauclerk Tower, which by the way I long much to see, but I find no possibility of coming southward this year. Believe me, dear Sir,

very sincerely yours

W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, July 6, 1777.

I don't know any body so much in the wrong as you are for not coming to me this summer; you would see such a marvellous oloset, so small, so perfect, so respectable; you would swear it came out of Havering in the bower, and that Catherine de Valois used to retire into it to write to Owen Tudor. Lady Di's drawings — no offence to yours, are hung on Indian blue damask, the ceiling, door and surbase are gilt, and in the window are two brave *fleur ae lis* and a lion of England, all royally crowned in painted glass, which as Queen Catherine never did happen to write a *billet doux* in this closet, signify Beauclerc, the denomination of the tower. This cabinet is to be sacred and not shown to the profane, as the drawings are not for the eyes of the vulgar. Yours shall have a place, which is the greatest honour I can do them. Miss Pope the actress, who is

at Mrs. Clive's, dined here yesterday, and litterally shed tears, though she did not know the story. I think this is more to Lady Di's credit, than a tom-tit pecking at painted fruit. The ceiling was fortunately finished some time ago. My plaisterer is turned raving methodist, and has sent me a frantic letter without sense or grammar, but desiring leave to open me a new plan of the gospel. I am glad he had no *new light* about making stucco!

Those gentry the methodists will grow very troublesome, or worse; they were exceedingly unwilling to part with that impudent hypocrite Dr. Dodd, and not less, to have forgery criminal. I own I felt very much for the poor wretch's protracted sufferings — but that was not the motive of their countenance; I cannot bear a militant arch inquisitor, or an impostor in a tabernacle. Thank you for your reply to the former &c.

I have no more gazettes litteraires, or politiques. Linguet, the outcast of France has published one here that makes some noise; part is satire on us, part panegyric, but in general very superficial. I have an anecdote apropos to him that is very curious. I will tell it you some day or other, but as it is a secret, I must not communicate it to the post-office.

They have sent me from town a fourth volume of the Archæologia, or old women's logic; the first paragraph is as complete nonsense as my plaisterer's letter.

Don't let this horrid weather put you out of humour with your *garden*, though I own it is pity we should have brought gardening to perfection, and have too

bad a climate to enjoy it. It is strictly true this year as I have often said, that ours is the most beautiful country in the world, when framed and glazed; but remember you can make the sun shine when you please, and as much as you please, and yet the verdure of your garden will be ever green. You are an excellent parish priest, catechize and make terriers I believe in perfection; but pray do not forget poor poetry, your natural vocation, as you have done so long; but you must be every thing, an inventor of musical instruments, a painter, and a law suitor.—

"Besides a hundred freaks that died in thinking."

Well, I cannot help loving you with all your faults and all your perfections.

I am just now in great trouble, though a little relieved to day by a better account. The Duke of Gloucester is extremely ill, and my poor niece in dispair! They are coming if they can to England for a little time, as the heat of the south is too mighty for him, how dear has ambition cost her; Adieu.

As it is right to be impartial, which I am not naturallv, I must tell you that at the end of the new Archæologia there is a very good essay on ancient castles, with very curious matter, by a Mr. King. I don't know who he is,— but it rains again, and there is no bearing it.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, Aston, July 27, 1777.

For the last fortnight of fine weather I said to myself, "lounge, sleep and be idle, break not thy repose even by writing a letter." I did so but a great thunder storm after drowning me fourteen good acres of hay, and afterwards leaving them to rot under a cold dun sky has driven me again to my fire-side, and to my *portfeuille*, where I find your favour of the 6th to my shame unanswered. You who care not a rush about your own hay, will not call the spoiling of mine any judgment upon me for my *accidie* which Chaucer's parson will tell you is one of the deadliest of the seven deadly sins. My quondam patron and patroness are gone to Hornby Castle and have called my curate Alderson thither. I conjecture the thunder storm would just give them the meeting about Ferrybridge, which would serve to corroborate her Ladyship's good opinion of the north, especially as it has been succeeded by such cold and comfortless weather. I suppose my Lord and Lady Carmarthen are of the party and a pleasant one I trust it is. Had I not reason when I pronounced that paw word — Independency — to the Archbishop, to be proud that I could pronounce it?

No body sends me any thing but you. It was but yesterday that the epistle to Dr. Shebbeare reached Aston, and that not sent to me, but to Mr. Verelst. There are good lines in it and a happy mixture of the

careless and serious, the burlesque and heroic. The ode too has its merit, but it seems *manqué*, all the lines in Horace are not alluded to, as *nomen tulit ab Africâ*, and *Carthaginis flammæ impiæ*, &c., which in these kind of imitations ought always to be observed. Tell me whether this criticism be not a just one. You should have contrived to have let me had a copy of this, because I ought not to come after an East Indian Governor in early intelligence of this sort.

What a glorious figure does Great Britain, as Empress of the sea, make in the papers of the last week, I fancy we shall hear in a short time that Dublin is in the possession of the provincials. I had rather it were Edinburgh for the sake of my Scotch bookseller. After Great Britain I think Mason *versus* Murray makes no contemptible eclat, 'tis quite a pleasure to see one's name so public. My lawyers give me a pleasant account of my Lord Chancellor's decision, who acquitted the said Murray of a contempt of his court because he was advised to it by an attorney. Hence in chancery, as at St. Omers, you may do what you please provided you have the opinion of a Dr. to support you, and I suppose our attorneys are full as good as their casuistical divines, at least his Lordship thinks so. I should be glad to hear in your next what accounts there are of the Duke of Gloucester, and pray send me all the news you can, and Gazettes Litteraires when you can spare them. Were you to send pacquets to Mr. Verelst's house in St. James Square, with a card to Mr. Manesty, saying only "Mr. Manesty is desired

"to forward this parcel to Aston the first time he sends any thing down to Mr. Verelst," I should receive them safe and with little trouble to your servants.

Yours very sincerely

W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 4, 1777.

You know I do not stand upon debtor and creditor with you, but should have indulged my pleasure of writing to you if I had been master of a moment's leisure or peace of mind. The various distresses and misfortunes of my family have engrossed me entirely. My nephew continues to fluctuate between violence and stupidity; as the last is not alarming, and there are scarce hopes of any comfitable recovery, I am inclined to wish it took place totally. In the mean time his affairs are as distracted, and have driven me into a paper war with his agent. The Duke of Gloucester is still exceedingly ill; Dr. Jebb flatters us he shall bring him to England, but promises nothing more. The Bishop of Exeter has been dying these nine months at last seems recovering. All these calamities and their consequential details have left me no time for amusement or attention to any thing else, and unless American privateers attack Hampton Court, I shall forget almost that there are thirteen colonies. In

good truth they seem fully able to take care of themselves, nay, at leisure to return our invasions. If they burn Edinburgh, I shall not cry fire. Lord John Cavendish is returned from a visit to his sister in Ireland, and gives a droll description of Viceroy Buckingham's entrenchments, which are not quite so strong as dictator Washington's, except in gin shops. The rest of the encampment consists in three tents. The Ossianites rave against Howe. Madame de Noailles the Embassador's wife arrives to day with a sprig I believe, of rue in her mouth merely to keep her from laughing. Cunningham sailed from Dunkirk with orders to be very civil till in wide ocean, but mistook the channel for it, and made nine prizes, which if he sent to Dunkirk will obtain his pardon. I heard this morning that France has fifteen thousand men in India, who I suppose have orders not to take Bengal within sight of the French coast. A good courtisan told me last night, as a counterpoise to all these *unforeseen accidents*, that Lord Chatham has had a fall from his horse, in a fit.—The bells are ringing — perhaps on that account.

I have no more *Gazettes Litteraires* yet, but I have a new work that I will lend you, that you will read, though very tiresome and ill written, printed here by some of the excrement of Paris; it is called *Memoires Secrets pour servir a l'Histoire de la Republique des Lettres en France depuis* 1762 *jusqu'à nos jours*. It is a journal of all the minor politics, literature, theatric anecdotes, scandal and fashions of that country, and as all those heads compose much of their politics, it is the

history of every thing but their foreign politics. There are eight thick duodecimos, ill written, with no judgment, and very partial, almost against everybody and thing, however it shows them, and that they make little better figure than we do, though we are so low! I think a man of sense and taste should blush to be talked of in either country. I think you are too difficult however about the Ode and the Epistle to Shebbeare, which will survive when all our trash is forgotten. What do you think of the immortal lines on Cox's Museum? I beg your pardon too if I cannot see the sin of omission in some lines of Horace not being paraphrased in so heinous a light. The author does not profess a translation, and surely was at liberty to take only what parts he found to his purpose. If I had time, I dare to say I could prove to you that the ode is a stricter imitation than those of Pope; but alas! I have other *guess besogne*; however, to show you I have not totally abandoned all the occupations I love, I will mention an instance, I chanced upon t'other day of the barbarity of the French language in Poetry. I happened to open a volume of Voltaire at Lord Ossory's, and found this beginning of a scene in one of his plays: —

Enfin donc desormais —

Match me that hemistich if you can in a tragedy of the Sauromatæ.

Garrick is dying of the yellow jaundice on the success of Henderson a young actor from Bath — *Enfin donc desormais* there must never be a good player again. As Voltaire and Garrick are the god and goddess of

Envy, the latter would put a stop to procreation, as the former would annihilate the traces of all antiquity, if there were no other gods but they.

I do not wonder you have had such bad crops both in your meadows and in chancery; consider how long since any sun shone on either. My *Hayssians* have cost me as much as if I had hired them of the Landgrave. One would think the elements this summer came from Scotland too; and I am surprised Sir John Dalrymple or Macpherson has not told us from the *dépôt des affaires étrangeres*, that the sun is an enemy to English constitutions. *Vivent les Brouillards!* I will finish with anticipating the best trait in the books I promise you. The witty Piron made a visit to that old bigot, the Archbishop of — not York, but Paris, soon after his issuing a thundering mandate against some French whigs, of which his grace had certainly not written one word. He asked Piron, "*l'avez vous lu?*" — "*oui Monseigneur, et vous?*"

Yours ever

H. W.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 18, 1777.

You will not suspect my silence of idleness, I am but too apt to overwrite to any one, I have so perfect a friendship for. I only suppress my communicative disposition when I have nothing to say but what would

grieve those that feel for me. The dangerous illness of the Duke of Gloucester, and the dreadful situation of my niece (and have not I another nephew besides!) have kept me in such agitation between hopes and despair, that I have had no peace or leisure; the present moment is very favourable; the Prince has mended amazingly; he has had a most gracious letter from the King, and so I hope I shall be at liberty to be a mortal again, and not anxious about Princes.

This is not my immediate motive for writing, but to tell you an amazing piece of news that I have this moment received from town. The dinner bell had rung — where? at Nuneham. The Earl did not appear. After much search he was found standing on his head in a well, a dear little favourite dog upon his legs, his stick, and one of his gloves lying near; my letter does not say whether he had dropped the other — In short, I know no more. I will behave as well as I can on all national misfortunes, and so I proceed to tell you with a proper degree of affliction that a victualler is come in who reports that the loquacious Howes have miscarried in their attempt on Philadelphia, and are believed to be gone to Boston: that the provincials have abandoned Fort Edward, it is said; and that, I suppose, the silent modest humble General Burgoyne has not yet finished his concise description of the victorious manner in which he took possession of it, for said description is not yet arrived. My dinner bell rings, and lest my servants should suspect an accident, I must finish; did you receive the *Gazettes littéraires* which I left where you ordered a month ago?

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 21, 1777.

This is but a codicil to my last, but I forgot to mention in it a new discovery that charms me more than Harlequin did at ten years old, and will bring all paradise before your eyes more perfectly than you can paint it to the good women of your parish. It will be the delight of your solitude, and will rival your own celestinette. It is such a perfecting of the camera obscura, that it no longer depends on the sun, and serves for taking portraits with a force and exactness incredible; and serves almost as well by candle light as by day. It is called *the delineator*, and is invented within these eighteen months by a Mr. Storer, a Norfolk man, one of the modestest and humblest of beings. Sir Joshua Reynolds and West are gone mad with it, and it will be their own faults if they do not excel Rubens in light and shade, and all the Flemish masters in truth. It improves the beauty of trees,—I don't know what it does not do—every thing for me, for I can have every inside of every room here drawn minutely in the size of this page. Mr. Storer fell as much in love with Strawberry Hill as I did with his instrument. The perspectives of the house, which I studied so much, are miraculous in this camera. The gallery cabinet, round drawing, and great bed chamber, make such pictures as you never saw. The painted glass and trees that shade it are Arabian tales. This

instrument will enable engravers to copy pictures with the utmost precision: and with it you may take a vase or the pattern of a china jar in a moment; architecture and trees are its greatest beauty, but I think it will perform more wonders than electricity, and yet it is so simple as to be contained in a trunk, that you may carry in your lap in your chaise, for there is such contrivance in that trunk that the filberd in the fairy tales which held such treasures was a fool to it; in short it is terrible to be threescore when it is just invented; I could play with it for forty years; when will you come up and see it? I am sure you will not go back without one.

I fear I was a little indelicate about Lord Harcourt's death, but I am so much more glad, when I am glad, than I can be sorry, when I am not, that I forgot the horror of the father's exit in my satisfaction at the son's succession; like the two universities, my congratulations to the reigning sovereign are much more hearty than my *luctus* for the departed one. I leave it to Lord Holderness and Lord Suffolk to pretend they are sorry that they have a competitor less for the garter.

Are not you content with Lord Abingdon's pamphlet? are you not more? are you not glad he has so well puffed away Burke's sophistries? who would have thought of this little David? I am sure I should not have been surprised if I had seen him knocking down a blackbird with a sling; my Lord's Grace of York will not be pleased.

As I am got far enough from the paragraph about

Lord Harcourt, may I ask if you do not feel a little satisfaction in the idea of our meeting at Nuncham? I am sorry I am threescore upon that account too, at that age one has not a vast many reasons for wishing to live long, but as loss of friends is the great bitter of old age, it is equally reasonable to like to enjoy their happiness. I am sure Lord Nuneham will have been exceedingly shocked; he is all good nature, and was an excellent son, and deserved a fonder father. I hear Mrs. Montagu made a high flown panegyric two days ago, on the late Earl. The poor man had not an idea; but Bishop Hurd dined at the same place, and I suppose she thought it necessary for a muse to sing the praises of all royal governors and preceptors. It was at Cambridge's, I was asked to dine there, but excused myself, for I have no pleasure in laughing at people, and am only weary when they are acting affected parts.

P. S. I recollect that they were the *Memoires de Bachaumont* and not the *Gazettes litteraires* that I sent you last: did you receive them?

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, Sept. 23, 1777.

One reason of my late silence was the alarming uncertainty which the papers constantly put me in concerning an account which I knew your tenderness for

your relations deeply interested you about. Relations are not "those cordial drops" which as some body says,

> ——— 'Heaven in our cup has thrown
> To make the nauseous draught of life go down,'

at least I don't find them so, no more than you yourself, for all my summer has been dawdled away in finding out the best way to be serviceable to a near one of my own, and I doubt without much effect. I was once asked why I did not marry again. My answer was that I could not find a woman that had the qualifications of a certain female whom the person who asked me knew, "The qualifications of her! why she is old, ugly and a termagant into the bargain, no matter for that! she was born in a boat, her mother was drowned, and she has no relation or country in the world, — those are the qualifications I require in the wife of my bosom;" and here endeth my chapter on the subject of relationship. I wish, at your leisure you would sully a sheet or two of paper with giving me the birth, parentage and education of General Burgoyne; at present I know little of him but as an orator, that consciousness of Christianity which he talks of in his proclamation in the very same breath that he threatens to give a stretch to his savage allies makes me think that one might compose a good liturgy for the use of the King's friends who like the General I trust have the same consciousness of Christianity, and who like him can reconcile the scalping knife with the Gospel. I am told that General Haldimand now made Govenor of Quebec was the first person who laid a plan before Government for

employing these Indians and that it was rejected. His promotion shews that government has had the grace to change its mind even if the gazette had not told us so before. Pray were not the Spaniards as defensible in employing dogs against the Americans as we are — but I scorn the word we, I am not, I cannot submit to call myself an Englishman. What an inconsistent creature is man! Poor Lord Harcourt, I fear he was so good a courtier that he would not have hesitated a moment about giving his vote for scalping his brethren in Canada and yet he dies in the humane act of saving a dog from drowning. I received about a fortnight ago six volumes of *Memoires Secrettes*, &c. for which I return you many thanks, and will take care to bring them back to you when I come to London, but as they laid long at Mr. Verelst's in St. James's Square, this will not be the way of any speedy conveyance to me, which I hoped it would. Lord Rockingham and his party are good Christians and can forgive their enemies, whatever other folks are. At York races they all dined at the Archbishop's public dinner and gave for a reason that his grace made them the first visit at their lodgings, so you may call them rogues, rascals or what you please, only visit them afterwards and they will be as merry as griggs with you. Seriously speaking I hardly know a more ridiculous proceeding than this, their secession was hardly more so. Had they avoided this visit his Grace's mitre would have set awkardly upon him for life. As it is he must write another Sermon before he meets with that contempt which every true

Whig ought to give him, but where is such a whig to be found? I see an unconverted whig has published something, is it worth the reading? my paper is more than full so

I remain; dear Sir,
yours most cordially
W. MASON.

Aston, Sept. 24, 1777.

But what will it cost? is it in a maker's hands? and can one have it down and know how to use it without being shown, not that I believe above half of what you tell me, for I have arguments *a priori* (which I learnt when I was at the University) to prove that it can't take likenesses or delineate the human figure, unless that figure undergo first the chymical process which Medusa was so much skilled in, and be converted into immoveable stone; but this is no disparagement to the instrument, but to the human figure, which ought not to have pulsation, and such other matters as will make it commit the crime of false drawing, whether it will or no, therefore I still long to see it, and would even give my Celestinette for it unseen, for my Celestinette is now above two years old.

I cannot say but I do feel the satisfaction you speak of about going to Nuneham, &c. &c. &c., and I have other satisfactions of a more patriotic nature, which though they signify nothing, as there is no such thing as patriotism in this our day, yet some how or other

they please one like the filbert in the fairy tales, if they are not quite so substantial as your delineating trunk. What would I give to see it for half an hour? I am hardly got far enough from my paragraph of mortality to recur to the trunk, but no matter.

I have never yet seen my Lord Abingdon's pamphlet, except an extract in the newspaper about the Archbishop. I am not clear whether said Earl did not dine with the Archbishop at the reconciliatory dinner which I mentioned in my last. It would have been right to do so as a party man, in order to make the Archbishop's definition the more true, which I should think was the reason which weighed with the rest of them.

This being a codicil like yours requires no formal signature.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 5, 1777.

There is nothing so unfortunate as to be a philosopher and a wise man, and a reasoner, and to know what can and can not be done. If invention had not preceded demonstration, we should by this time have understood the whole system of the universe, but have thought it impossible to alter or improve any thing in our world. This is my opinion, and you may confute it by argument if you please. I who have a sovereign

contempt for Euclid, and Newton, and Locke, and admire nothing but original genius, and hold that every thing will be found out at last, as flying, living for ever, &c. trust to none of my senses, having seen Jonas perform what I did not believe, when I saw, and heard Le Texier be a dozen persons at once. In short it is a joke to say any thing is impossible. The delineator does perform wonders; and though from my own immachinality I can do little or nothing with it, which has abated something of my enthusiasm, you who will be able to work wonders with it, are to blame to contest its possibilities. As I tell you I don't know how to manage it, you may swear I cannot describe or give directions for conducting it. It cost me ten guineas, and I believe they are thrown away, for in a twelvemonth it will certainly be brought to greater perfection. In one point you are very right, one must be as motionless as Lord Abercorn, or the least vibration of the features spoils the portrait. In good truth though I stared like the mob at the witchery of this new instrument, yet if it had not been so mysteriously involved in a box, I am not sure it would have surprized me more than any reflection painted on a diminishing mirror. The child has had his plaything broken to see what it was made of, and is weary of it; however I think it will answer admirably for taking the insides of buildings, and near prospects, and statues, and vases, and be of great help to engravers, and it does serve without the sun.

Lord Harcourt has given away at least fifty thousand

pounds to his daughter and younger son. I hold it very right not to heap all on heirs apparent, and yet loving the new Earl, and not caring a straw for the brother and sister, my concern for the father is not at all augmented. I had 'too' the same reason that you hint at for being glad our friend is in possession. He had told me his intentions for you, but not knowing whether he had mentioned them to you, I was trusty you see, and did not divulge them even to you, — but it was a charming thought, and I hope the well will not be stopped up.

You ask the history of Burgoyne the pompous. He is a natural son of Lord Bingley, who put him into the entail of the estate, but when young Lane came of age the entail was cut off. He ran away with the old Lord Derby's daughter, and has been a fortunate gamester. Junius was thought unjust, as he was never supposed to do more than play very well. I have heard him speak in parliament, just as he writes; for all his speeches were written and laboured, and yet neither in them nor in his conversation, did he ever impress me with an idea of his having parts. He is however a very useful commander, for he feeds the gazette and the public, while the Howes and the war are so dumb.

I have read the Unconnected Whig, and recommend him to you; he does not waste words like the unmerciful hero of the last paragraph. It is a short, clear strong picture of our present situation and its causes. I see no fault in it, but its favour for the Rockinghams

the most timid set of time-serving triflers that ever existed; why should not he dine with his Grace? Do not all Lord Rockingham's politics begin and end with dinners? Is not decency their whole wisdom? when they shunned Wilkes, could they avoid the Archbishop? I would lay a wager that if a parcel of schoolboys were to play at politicians, the children that should take the part of the opposition, would discover more spirit and sense. The cruellest thing that has been said of the Americans by the Court, is, that they were encouraged by the opposition. You might as soon light a fire with a wet dish-clout. Adieu.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Nuneham, Oct. 22, 1777.

Here am I with the Isis before me drawing its line of silver through the greenest meadow in the world, a glorious wood to my left, and another glorious wood to my right, Abingdon spire there, Radcliff library there, &c. &c. &c. &c. Yet here am I without my delineator, O that you would lend me yours! I would pawn my machinality upon it, that I could put it together without any directions, yet if there be printed directions in the trunk so much the better, and then as to the trunk I would take as much care of it as king James the second of humane-memory did of his, when he was about to be shipwrecked, and I would bring it safe to you back in less than a fortnight

with the *Memoires Secrettes*, which your charity blest my solitariness with at Aston. And I will give you the heel-piece of one of the Royal martyr's boots which he lost before the gates of Hull (the place of my nativity) and which has been lain up in lavender in our family ever since. — And as the Oxford coach goes the Henley road through Brentford every day, there is no doubt but the trunk would arrive here with the utmost safety. But I will say no more on the subject, only that if what I have said and what I have promised, is not enough to move your compassion, you must be as obstinate and mulish as

A King's favourite or as a *

My Lord Harcourt who will be my surety for the safety of the said trunk sends his best compliments and thanks for your agreeable letter. I am, whether you grant my petition or not,

your most faithful and obliged servant

W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, Oct. 24, 1777.

Your letter's date made it still more welcome than their predecessors. I wish myself with you without envy, and think of Nuneham with more pleasure than I dare tell Lord Harcourt. I am delighted too with the prospect of seeing you so soon. My letter's date tells you why I do not instantly obey you. I am here and

must be so some days, and the delineator is locked up at Strawberry, or I hope you do not think I am so selfish as to prefer a plaything to your amusement. I will send it the moment I return merely to satisfy you, for Mr. Storer has already improved his idea so much, as to obviate I believe most of your objections. He is making me another, and honestly offered me to change it for me—and he has made a stand to it too, that remedies many inconveniences; but that I have not got yet, nor just now can I attend but to the present occupation.

The Duke and Duchess arrived yesterday. His R. H. is and looks better than I expected, not pulled though pale; his leg is still swelled and he is lame, but it has not opened; and his voice is strong and spirits good. The Duchess looks in health, but is much leaner and looks older. I have not seen them a moment alone, for they have not been a moment alone; all I know is, the Duke has written to ask when. The answer was not come half an hour ago, it is decent I should stay two or three days; and then if I was great enough to be proud of lowering myself, I should say, I shall return to my plough. No, nor am I one of those, who, though so great, ought to be sent to plough.

I am much obliged to you for your offering, yet though I like the occasion of its becoming a relick, I cannot accept it. Lord Harcourt has given me the glorious and immortal spurs of King William; can I receive his uncle's boot-heel into the same sanctuary!

when you want to be a Cardinal, you shall present it to his Grace of York, or to any of the *et ceteras* that you do not see from Nuneham.

Pray tell Lord and Lady Harcourt that I have been a perfect courtier for them, and said every thing in the world, and am commanded to return every thing in the world. I was impatient lest all England and still more, all Scotland should be beforehand with me in addresses, one Englishman offered one this very morning — *mais attendez moi sous l'orme.* There we shall talk more at our ease.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Nuneham, the day after his Majesties happy accession, 1777.

Lord Harcourt has fancied my presence so necessary towards completing some alterations he has made on his terrace, that I have not been able to persuade him to let me leave this place before next Wednesday or Thursday, when I am obliged to go to town before I can visit Strawberry Hill, on business which I will tell you when I have the honour to see you, which I hope will be very soon; in the meantime if any thing calls you to town, I am to be found at my good host's in Curzon street, as usual.

I am charmed with the fair bearer of this note. I wish I was a Petrarch that I might fall in love with her, and why not without being a Petrarch? for tis

surely more natural for an old widower to fall in love with a young maid, than for a young batchelor to be enamoured with an old married woman who had borne as many children as our gracious Queen Charlotte, which I think was that poet's case; yet putting love out of the question, I may surely in all reason admire a beauty that can only be exceeded by its accompaniments of good nature, affability and modest simplicity. I would call it innocence were it not too unfashionable a thing, and what I believe no young lady so advanced in years as she is, (for I suspect she is almost seventeen) can possibly be suspected of, certain it is we have a brace of very accomplished ladies now in the house, who seem to have got rid of all that long before they came to her years of discretion; but I only say *seem* for I would not speak with precision on such a delicate subject for the world.

Breakfast will permit me to add no more at present than that I am, dear Sir,

very faithfully yours

W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, Jan. 17, 1778.

I have not written to you since you went as I had nothing to tell you; and I write improperly now, when one is probably at the eve of having something to say,

but the fish I have to fry is of another kind. Can it be true that you have an opera coming on the stage, and that you never mentioned it to me? Had I torn Orpheus piecemeal, I could not be more unworthy of musical communication. Am I so untuneable that I must not hear airs unless I can sing them? Yes, you have written an opera, and it is called Sappho, and I suppose Mrs. Montagu is to be first woman. Lord Strafford is my authority: and yet I can scarce think you would have been so basely unfriendly; if you have, I wish your Celestinette may be broken about your ears, or that Lady Rockingham may desire a rehearsal at our own house in the morning, and make the poet and the whole orchestra wait till nine at night.

Knapton is dying, but the promise to Sandby is superseded, *de par le Roy*, because it dates from the Duke of Grafton.

General Howe has been to take another look at Washington and passed Eldest again. The town of Froome, concluding *Burgoyne* was a Frenchman by his name, made great rejoicings on his being taken prisoner.

I heard last night that Voltaire is dead; now one may buy his works safely, as he cannot write them over and over again.

You shall not hear a word more from me till you clear yourself about the opera. Should it prove true I shall never believe a syllable more about your idle-

ness, nay shall conclude that every thing that appears, is yours, and I am sure that will be full vengeance.

P S. Pray did you write the Roman Sacrifice, the last new tragedy? It was detestable.

I return you the sermon, and would not advise its being printed unless much clamboured against — when, as all objections are exaggerated, it will appear less offensive than was expected. I would certainly have the two passages on Dalrymple's History and the Sons of the Scottish Rebels softened. They should not be quite changed, as they will certainly be remembered. I would entirely omit the glance at the ladies, who are very innocent in comparison of the men of the age. I would still be more earnest for his leaving out the passage on himself. I am totally against such declarations, and can see no reason why he should not be a bishop, when some of its worthless occupiers are gone. I think the time is coming when the sermon will have more weight, and *as it has been preached*, it can be recalled. The taxes, the treaty with the Americans, and the probable imminent war with France, will make it little noticed at this moment, but by his enemies. Let them be a little silenced and dashed, and they will not care to clamour. It cannot be lost, because it has been preached; we should have a little patience, and I think it will not be necessary long.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, Jan. 20, 1778.

Pacify yourself my good Sir. I have not written: I am only writing an Opera, and what I have written of it I here send you, desiring if you do not absolutely condemn both the intention and execution, to seal it up and send it to Mr. Giardini. He has already seen the whole plan and he must now see an act to tell me whether it will suit his purpose. As to yourself you know enough of the Lady's story fully to comprehend the drift of these pages which contain her catastrophe. But I know you rather want to know why I have undertaken to write an Opera, than how I have written it. But this is a long story and relates to a little shoemaker of Aston. Mr. Stonhewer will tell you the particulars, and how my little shoemaker and this Opera become so intimately united. Now don't talk to me about the author of Caractacus, and that he ought to write nothing but what is equal, if not superior to Caractacus. If you prevent me from writing Operas, I'll write nothing but Ballads. "Agreed, if they be political ones, as many as you please," and dont say that a grave divine turned of fifty, debases his cloth, by telling a love story. Leave that argument for the Bishops to handle. I have made up my conscience as to that matter. Besides, if the Bishops condemn me on this head they will nevertheless admire my learning, for all the fragments of Sappho will be

translated and find their place in this drama, for instance this third act opens with one of the Δέδυκε μὲν ἁ σελάνα καὶ Πληϊάδες, &c.

Upon the whole then I recommend this poor innocent thing to your mercy as a critic, not as if it had my last hand, and its last polish, yet in such a state as will admit of little improvement except in particular lines and words, about this latter I mean to be peculiarly careful, in order to make the language as soft, and consequently as fit for music as possible; for I am persuaded this matter has never yet been sufficiently attended to by the few of our poets who have written professedly for music. Pray put up the letter to Giardini &c. in the paquet before you seal it.—I shrewdly suspect some dark practice in this death of Lord Pigot, pray tell me what you hear of that matter, and of all others, for now the political as well as natural frost is thawed, dear Sir,

yours most truly,

W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Jan. 24, 1778.

I received your Act late last night, and though I have run through it but once, I am impatient not only to pardon you, but thank you. I can forgive you anything but idleness; and music, which your words always are, has charms to soothe even me. The lan-

guage is so harmonious, that I think as I did of Dryden's Ode, that it will be more melodious unset than when adapted. Yet if you can rival Dryden, Giardini cannot paragon Handel. I am, I know, a most poor judge of musical composition, yet may not I ask if Giardini possesses either force or simplicity; your Act is classic Athenian — shall it be subdi-di-di-vi-vi-vi-ded into modern Italian? —but it is too late to ask that question.

I shall now mention a very few criticisms.

The language is so sweet, that my soul that loves chiaro scuro as a contrast at least wants a little more sombre, and the place I would allot for it is Sappho's speech after the vision. The parts of Metastasio, (I do not compare you down to him) that please me most are his long soliloquies of accompanied recitative in last acts; they give scope to the poet, the passions, the actress, and the composer. I would not have Sappho determine at once, but struggle with love, fear, hope, despair, and when she doubts obeying the god, thunder may mark his anger, and decide her, for she obeys a dream too suddenly, though classic times may justify her more than a modern would be justified.

As you are sublime in choruses, why have you only one in an opera,— in a Greek opera? They are simple and yet give variety; sure a hymeneal chorus is necessary.

I have an objection, which is odd, even to the parts I have *not* seen, but you hint (by Sappho in her female dress) at her being disguised as a man in a former

Act. Will not *that* be a little too characteristic, and give a handle to buffoonery in the learned part of the mob.

I have few verbal criticisms to make, though I could commend a thousand passages, particularly the two lines on Alpheus, and the exquisite first air. I am not quite pleased with *down, down, down,* as a little too artificial, and then *down* should not come in the very next line, and in a sense that is the very opposite to the former sense, and shows we express a precipitate fall and the softness of repose by the same sound.

I do not quite approve so forced an expression as *downcast tenderness,* and I cavil at

> I *feel* that full, that heart*felt* tenderness
> That blesses those who never *felt* distress,

and would rather change *heartfelt,* which has a German sound. In the second line *felt* is most sonorous.

I have literally but one more qualm: when Sappho dedicates her lyre, she says it is *far sweeter than the harp.* This methinks is too nice a distinction for a person in her situation to make, and fitter for a commentator's note than a woman on the point of destroying herself. Yes, I see another, that I have just cast my eyes on; Sappho must not utter the word *requiem*; in short, Metastasio may use such an anachronism, but Musæus must not, shall not.

I shall send the Act and the letter to Giardini, as you order, though with regret I own; for I doubt his music will not have that majestic greatness and distinctiveness that are necessary to let the words be under-

stood. Add that our singers want more to be taught to articulate than to sing. All the women jabber, and bad as his taste was, Beard did more justice to sense than any of our performers, for though he laid a stress on every syllable, yet at least the audience, such as were capable, could suppose the right accents. In short, I wish your opera could be accompanied only by the lyre and the tibia.

There is no new event. The parliament has done little or nothing, as they wait for Lord George to lead up the blues. I have no time for details, and, in truth, I am thinking more of Sappho than of the nation, and am happy when I can amuse myself with reading any thing but politics, which I am sure nobody will ever read after the day they are published; but indeed who does write what is readable. I have got two more volumes of Shenstone's Correspondence, and they are like all the rest, insipidity itself. Home's Alfred died three days old; the Battle of Hastings is to appear this evening; the child of as feeble a parent. Garrick has been *reading* plays at Althorpe à la Texier, and been adored as usual; yet I do not believe he succeeded half so well in the women. He goes on writing his wretched epilogues too, for he cannot sit down with the *strulbruggism* that he had the sense to take up.

There is a Mr. Potter too, I don't know who, that has published a translation of Æschylus, and as far as I have looked is a good poet. I am sure he has taste, for in his preface he speaks like an initiate of Elfrida

and Caractacus. I am delighted with Prometheus, though I do not approve of a mad cow for first woman.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, Feb. 4, 1778.

I shall be sorry if you depend on me for your winter provision of news, I know so little, and the papers so much, that I could only repeat their information with not half their eloquence. All last week I was confined with a great cold, which I thought it impossible for me to catch, not having had a genuine one these five or six years; I mean, not more than what I call a cold when I want an excuse for not doing what I have not a mind to do; I was blooded in spite of the gout's teeth, and yet am well again.

I hear you have finished a third book of the garden, thank the muses you seldom do any thing when you have nothing to do. It seems I am to learn your deeds from second and third hands.

As I suppose you care more about authors than politicians, I shall begin with the former. The Battle of Hastings — or rather one side it, for not a Norman appears, has been acted. I have not seen it, the accounts are a little like a charade, for they say, the first part makes one cry, the latter laugh, and the whole sleep. It will soon be gathered in due chronologic order to its predecessor Alfred.

I forgot till I had filled my sheet to answer your question about Lord Pigot, and then it was not worth while to tap a new page, as the account was contradicted. It is now confirmed. I know no more than you see in the newspapers, and thence you will collect that there has been more than meets the ear.

The enigma of the day, as he has oft been, is Lord Chatham. He has quarrelled with General Rockingham on the question of independence, and in a manner declared off, yet he is expected to day in the house of Lords to anathematize the new levies. There is much talk too of his coming into place, which I doubt; every body must have discovered that his crutch is no magic wand, and if the lame leads the blind it is not the way of shunning a ditch. Charles Fox has tumbled old Saturn from the throne of oratory, and if he has not all the dazzling lustre, has much more of the solid materials. They say nothing ever excelled his oration against the *unfortunate minister*, who was truly unfortunate that day, for had lord George been present, the thunder had fallen on him. Charles's speech on Monday was as marvellous for method and memory, and was really unanswerable, for not one of the ministers knew what to say, and so said nothing, and that silence cost them many votes. In short the minority amounted to above an hundred and sixty, in which were several tories. It is supposed the inquiries will be put to a violent death, which will be very weak, for the people are contented with whatever is discussed and voted,

but grow impatient when their ears are stopped by force.

The new levies are like Glendower's—he can stamp and call spirits from the vasty deep; but they don't come, consequently they will not go. I fancy the American war is pretty near an end, I mean as to attempting more than keeping what remains. I don't think there will be a French war *yet*, unless we chance to go together by the ears at sea. However it hangs by a thread.

Having now given you the quintessence of my intelligence you see it would not have made one more letter than it does. I shall reserve a vacuum for what may pass to day in the Lords; but I have very rarely known a much expected debate answer. Chance is as much mistress of Orators as of Generals; and the prepared engagements of both, frequently turn out like Sir W. Howe's two *surveys* of Washington's army.

5th.

Lord Chatham did not appear, they say, he has the gout, but I suppose not so bad but he could hobble to the end of the park if he was much intreated. I have heard of nothing particular that passed in either house, but have seen nobody that was in either; in good truth I am little curious about debates. The ruin has gone a great deal too far to make parliament of any consequence; speakers may amuse themselves with filling up the interstices of events, but when a house is falling does one care who painted the staircase? Yes, Lord

Chatham does. Because he once raised the building a story higher, he thinks he could do as much when the foundations have given way. Adieu! I long to see your garden. I am forced to read the newspapers or my eyes would starve, yet it is feeding them with offals.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, Feb. 6, 1778.

I know thee, and the wickedness of thy heart! You would have my opera turned into a tragedy. I know the speech of Sappho would be much better if turned as you would have it. But if three drops of cold water which had never been mixed with the unchaste wave of Alphæus is not a sufficient cure for the most outrageous love that ever was, there is no faith in mythology; all the rest of your criticism I submit to, and kiss the rod, I even will expunge the line about the harp, though it is a verbatim translation of a fragment of Sappho.

As to Giardini, look you if I did not think better of him than I do of Handel, my little shoemaker would not have had the benefit he will have (I hope) from this labour of my brain. Let Handel's music vibrate on the tough drum of royal ears; I am for none of it.

However as I am now fully employed in writing a Fast sermon for York Minster, music and operas must

be lain by for a season. I hope however you have sent the Act to Giardini, otherwise he will think I have cheated him.

Will you be at Elfrida on Saturday night, and will you clap like a dragon? I have taken more pains in fitting it for the stage, than I did about Caractacus. On Wednesday I go to York, pray remember *to direct to York*, to, yours

most faithfully,
W. MASON.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, Feb. 8, 1778.

I am much obliged to you for your letter received to day. Your news about the English Garden has been told you as imperfectly as that of the opera. It is far from finished and not even fit for any body's inspection at present; when it is you shall hear more from me. I now write to tell you a story which I think I have told you before, but which the debate which I read in the papers about Lord Abingdon's motion, makes me think ought to be more public. In 1745, when the rebels were at Derby and subscriptions were going on in London, a certain (then) Barrister * at Lincoln's Inn was called upon by a parish officer for his name &c., he was treated as a man should be that solicits an illegal unconstitutional subscription. The

* Lord Mansfield. H. W.

rebels retreated from Derby. The barrister flew immediately to the parish officer's house to put down his name; the P. O. was from home, had locked up the book; a blacksmith was called for to break open the bureau, and the name was inserted! This parish officer lived either in Long Acre, or Great Queen Street. This I had from good authority two years ago, and was told the fact might yet be authenticated. Adieu.

I wrote a long letter two posts ago.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASÓN.

Arlington Street, Feb. 12, 1778.

I have received two letters from you, one of the 6th. and another of the 8th., but not the long one you mention; for the first was but of 25 lines, and the latter of 23, neither of which I should think a long one from any body from whom I liked to hear at all, much less shall you pretend that one page is to pass for length; yet I conclude you have written none that I have not received. However I answer you immediately that you may ascertain the fact, and I wish for the future you would keep the dates of the letters you do write, long or short.

I will not talk now of the story you mention, which I not only know, but remember happening. Basta! there will be a time.

I am dismally afraid I shall not be able to go to Elfrida on Saturday. My cold, that I thought gone is worse, with the addition of a sore throat. I have not been out of my doors these two days, and as putrid sore throats are very rife, of which one of Lord Bute's daughters is dead, I am afraid of ripening mine to one. I am a little sorry you bestow your words, not only on folk that cannôt act, but on voices that cannot articulate. If Sappho is to be sung, I wish it were by Italians, for from the pains they take to speak English, they pronounce more distinctly than our natives.

I sent your Act to Giardini, and wish he may make it discourse most eloquent music. His violin to be sure will make a long soliloquy — but though I like Handel, I am not bigotted. I thought Dryden's Ode more harmonious before he set it than after, yet he had expression; and I prefer Charles Fox's native wood notes to Burke's feigned voice, though it goes to the highest pitch of the gamut of wit.

Apropos, his last Friday's parody of Burgoyne's talk with the Indians, was the *chef d'œuvre* of wit, humour, and just satire, and almost suffocated Lord North himself with laughter; as his pathetic description of the barbarities of the Cis-atlantic army

Drew iron tears down Barré's cheek.

I wish I could give you an idea of that superlative oration. He was pressed to print it, but says he has not time during the session. How cold, how inadequate will be my fragment of a sketch from second, third and thousandth hands; yet I must send you a bit of a

daub with probably even the epithets wrong or misplaced, though each was picturesque. Well, though I can neither draw nor colour, *invenies etiam disjecti membra.* Hurlothrumbo exhorted seventeen Indian nations, who so far from understanding the Hurlothrumbic dialect, are probably almost as ignorant of English; he exhorted them by the dictates of *our* holy religion, and by their reverence for *our* constitution, to repair to his Majesty's standard. Where was that? said Burke: on board Lord Dunmore's ship;—and he exhorted them (I suppose by the same divine and human laws) not to touch the hair of the head of man, woman or child, while living, though he was willing to deal with them for scalps of the dead, being a nice and distinguished judge between the scalp taken from a dead person and the head of a person that dies of being scalped. Let us state this christian exhortation and christian injunction, said Burke, by a more familiar picture; suppose there was a riot on Tower Hill, what would the keeper of his majesty's lions do? would he not fling open the dens of the wild beasts, and then address them thus? My gentle lions, my humane bears, my sentimental wolves, my tender-hearted hyænas, go forth; but I exhort ye, as ye are christians and members of a civilized society, to take care not to hurt man, woman or child, &c. &c. Barré's codicil was to threaten to paste on churches this memorable talk under the injunctions of the bishops for a fast. Gov. Johnstone said he rejoiced there were no strangers in the gallery, as Burke's speech would have excited

them to tear the ministers to pieces as they went out of the house; the ministers are much more afraid of losing their places. Eloquence, like music, is too much improved in our days to have any of their old effects on the passions of a large audience.

Voilà a truly long letter. I leave the application to your conscience.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Feb. 18, 1778.

I have two small morsels of news to tell you, and do not know which you will choose to hear first. As you cannot choose without knowing, it would be vain to wait for your answer, especially as I cannot state them without preferring one to the other. Iricisms, it is true, are not out of fashion. *Nos seigneurs* the peers will not vote truisms to be true, lest they should betray the weakness of the nation, though those truisms, and the reason for not asserting them, are given in every newspaper, which newspapers are read in every coffee-house in Paris. Ergo their lordships suppose that France supposes herself to know nothing but what appears in the votes.

As a loyal subject and freeman of Parnassus, I must believe that you interest yourself more in Heliconian affairs than in the politics of the *late* empire of Great Britain. I therefore announce to you the arrival of Voltaire at Paris. Yes; there he is. Probably *re-*

called from exile to raise a regiment of infidels for the defence of holy church.

The other event would not be worth mentioning, but for its novelty. In that light, to be sure, no parallel instance is to be found in ancient or modern history, whether Ammonite, Jewish, Chaldean, Egyptian, Chinese, Greek, Roman, Constantinopolitan, Frank, French, British, Saxon, Pict, Ossianite, Mogul, Indian, or English, (all which I have examined carefully this morning to no purpose) nay in the tales of the fairies, in which I am still more deeply versed, I find nothing similar. You perhaps, who have all ecclesiastical history at your fingers' ends, may recollect something approaching to the transaction of *yesterday the 17th of February*, a day of confession and humiliation, that will be remembered as long as the name of England exists. Yesterday, Feb. 17, did the whole administration, by the mouth of their spokesman, Lord North, no, no, not resign; on the contrary, try to keep their places by a full and ample confession of all their faults, and by a still more extraordinary act, — by doing full justice both to America and to the opposition, — by allowing that the former are no cowards, nor conquerable, — that they are no rebels, for the new commissioners are to treat with the Congress or anybody, and, by asking pardon by effects, i. e. the cancelling all offensive acts, and by acknowledging the independence of the thirteen provinces, not *verbally* yet *virtually*. These were Lord North's words. To the opposition full justice is done; for if the administration has been

in the wrong from beginning to end, their opponents must have been a little in the right.

The faults of the administration, according to their own calculation, are *two:* one of being misinformed, the other of persisting in a mere point of honour. Some will perhaps think they have been guilty of two more; — the destruction of twenty-four thousand lives on their own side, and Lord knows how many thousands on t'other, with the burning of towns, desolation of the country, and the expence of above thirty millions of money; the second consists of two parts, — rejection of all proposals of accommodation offered by the opposition, and the delay of offering terms themselves, till they knew it was too late; for Lord North was asked if he did not know that the treaty between the Americans and France is signed? He would not answer till Sir George Savage hallowed out, "an answer, an answer, an answer!" His lordship then rose, could not deny the fact, but said he did not know it *officially*; that is, I suppose, it does not stand on the votes of the parliament at Paris.

What shall I say more? though this is not half of that ignominious seventeenth of February. The measure passed *nemine contradicente*. The tories gulped their shame, the rest *pocketed*. *Note*. The opposition approved an attempt at peace, though a hopeless one. Charles Fox congratulated himself on having converted Lord North. The papers will tell you the rest. If any thing could deepen this recantation of wilful criminality it is that it was extorted at last by the urgency

of the moment, in short, to prevent this pretended spirit of pacification from being anticipated by France's notification of her alliance with the American states to all Europe; — what, if by a declaration of war! Her troops are in full march to the coast, the Duc de Lauzun recalled hence and ordered to be in France by the 26th. How one blushes to be an Englishman! to be a countryman of the majority! I have no comfort but that I am not a Scot.

A night's rest has not dissipated the astonishment of mankind. Everybody that comes in stares, and cannot express himself. Who can at once reconcile a supplication of alliance with the high and mighty states of America, with a total improbability of obtaining it? and the faintest hope of peace, with a prospect of a war with France? How, an acknowledgment of independence, with a pretension of supplies, or a suspension of the war for a year and a half, with any intention of renewing it, when the Americans shall have had time to settle their government and recruit? but who *can* digest all the contradictions into which the government plunges every day?

Who can believe what I have read in the papers to day? — that one Hutton, a Moravian, has been dispatched to Paris to fling himself at Dr. Franklin's feet and sue for forgiveness? it is said that the man fell on the doctor's neck with tears and implored peace. What triumph on one side! What humiliation on the other! Will princes still listen to those vile flatterers who fascinate them with visions of empire, that terminate in

such mortifications? for the philosopher replied, "it is too late."

One cannot rein one's pen at such a moment: it runs away with moralities; but I will stifle commonplace reflexions. Shall I not appear a trifler if I can mix any thing else with such thoughts; yet having crossed over into a fourth page, I will fill up the remainder with two bagatelles; one was a story related in the House of Commons. Somebody passing along the road in Scotland, heard great outcries and lamentation and complaints of violence. He stopped to inquire the cause; another person replied, "oh, they are only making volunteers," i. e. pressing volunteers.

I have waded through Alfred. The author says it has been objected that he has tamed a legislator into a lover in a novel, but he pleads that Alfred had probably been in love. The same excuse would apologize for representing the Duke of Marlborough, not as a hero but slabbering in his dotage. In the play itself I found this line, and have written in the title-page as a motto,

I shall surprize you much; my name is Alfred;

mine is

yours most sincerely,

H. W.

P. S. Pray tell me you receive this.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, York, Feb. 23, 1778.

As many millions of thanks are due to you for your two letters of the 12th and 18th, particularly for the last, as there have been millions of money spent in order to persuade the Americans to permit us to acknowledge their independency. But I have hardly time to pay you, and nothing but thanks to pay you withal. I am deeply engaged in my Fast sermon which is to be preached on Friday, and not half finished yet. My text is taken out of the book of the Lamentations of the Prophet Jeremiah, and is as follows:

> Abroad the sword bereaveth
> At home there is as death.

which you perceive runs very musically and even lyrically —

> 'Twas when the seas were roaring
> With hollow blasts of wind.

If all my periods have as fine a rhythmus, I don't doubt the sermon will have an uncommon effect on the ears of our Lord Mayor and Aldermen. To be serious I mean to write it with care, lest I should find it necessary to print it; for this is a Tory town, though there is a Rockingham club in it, and I question not but they will be ready to misrepresent it, however, *macte virtute*. This is no time to be mealy-mouthed in.

My very principal virgin is within a few weeks of her time, and Elfrida herself is obliged to go to Bath, perhaps to lye in too; so I fancy the representation of my tragedy will be postponed till next winter, and will probably be performed in the Opera-house which Sheridan and Harris have bought. I am rather pleased at this, as it will be more likely then and there to have fair play. I write this on a sheet of paper, on which my friend Mr. Burgh had previously transcribed the story I mentioned to you. If you are curious to have it better authenticated we will examine Martin Luther's works for the purpose. Pray don't count the lines in this letter to twit me for my brevity, for indeed I have nothing more to say, and what with twice a day prayers, chapters and settling of fines, and visits from the gentry of the place, who always make them at the most inconvenient times, I am really almost as fully and as usefully employed as if I was Sir Gray Cooper,

believe me ever yours

W. MASON.

* The following tale is extracted from a book entitled, "Meditations of a divine Soul, or the Christian's Guide amidst the various opinions of a vain world," printed in London for John Kersey, 1703, octavo. The tale is ascribed to Martin Luther, but without any reference to the portion of his writings from which it is taken.

"I knew a young man in the city of Erfurdt who used his utmost efforts to debauch a damsel that

* This extract is in the writing of Mr. Burgh.

waited upon his mother, insomuch that this gentlewoman being informed by the same damsel of her son's design, resolved to prevent him, &c. * *

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* * * * * In process of time the mother took her daughter home, as if she were the child of a stranger, who was of so delicate a complexion and of so obliging a behaviour that the son fell in love with her, and married her with the mother's consent, neither of them knowing any thing at all of the matter; so that she was his daughter, sister and wife. But the judgment of God soon overtook the mother's horrid crime, and fell heavy upon the son for his former wickedness."

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, March 4, 1778.

It is not from having any thing new to tell you that I write you a few lines, but to ask how I may send you half a dozen more *gazettes litteraires,* for I conclude your Varelsts are in town. There is no hurry about them, they will always be equally new to you, and not be much so neither; you will find in them the following pretty riddle, which I had seen before:

Eloigné de l'objet que j'aime,
Lui seul calme mon ennui;
Il est plus beau que l'amour même
Mais elle est plus belle que lui.

The word is a *portrait* and is rather too enigmatic, for one must know the solution, to find any sense in *elle*. I have translated it, but as we have no genders it is impossible to render *lui* and *elle*; my imitation perhaps makes it too clear:

From the dear object of my dreams
Remov'd, I still that object see;
As fair as love itself it seems:
Yet she is fairer still than he.

I wish you would try it; you will have better success. I have made another enigma on the same subject, but cannot tell whether it is good or bad, for how can one tell whether a riddle is difficult to guess, when one knows the subject before hand; but do not I lay you under the same difficulty, *le voici!*

I counterfeit all bodies, yet have none,
Bodies give shadows, shadows give me one
Lov'd for another's sake, that person yet
Is my chief enemy whene'er we meet;
Thinks me too old, though blest with endless youth,
And like a monarch hates my speaking truth.

The two middle verses are very bad I know.

I agree with you; there is no harm in Mrs. Elfrida Hartley's pregnancy, your drama could not be well represented by the set at Covent Garden; not that the union of the two companies will make one good, yet

will be a better than the worse half. However I doubt whether the old saying will prove true in your case, that *ce qui est differé n'est pas perdu.* My reason I gave six weeks ago to Le Texier; he was consulting me whether I thought it would be advantageous for him to take the opera-house on the present plan (on which the other managers have outbidden him) I replied, " *Oui, tant qu'il y ait de l'Angleterre.*" The two conciliatory bills are so very yielding, that nothing but the immediate dread of a French war, or the impossibility of raising money to maintain the armies and fleets in America, could have reconciled the court to such vast concessions, if they are sincere in the desire of treating, which, notwithstanding wiser men than I believe them, I doubt. I can see obvious reasons for seeming to treat. I hear none to persuade me that the Americans will treat. Lord Carlisle is named one of the commissioners, and is very fit to make a treaty that will not be made.

Voltaire came to Paris without leave, but they say has received an indulgent promise from Monsr. de Maurepas that he shall not be molested. His chief object was to get a new play acted, which he calls Irene, it was Alexis Comnene, but the latter word sounded too harsh. He has half dispatched himself with reading this piece to the actors, and thinks of nothing else except of being received by the King and Queen, which Madame du Deffand who has made him two visits thinks he will not obtain. I should like to have been present at this interview of the two only surviving

lillies of the *siecle de Louis Quatorze,* yet he is more occupied with the dandelions of the present age.

I am very thankful for the extract Mr. Burgh gave himself the trouble to send me, and am satisfied. Mrs. Delane had heard of and insisted on seeing the tragedy. I knew how it would shock her devout delicacy. She returned it with compliments, but was sorry the subject would condemn it to oblivion—perhaps so; and it's more intrinsic demerits, but I do not think being acted will save many of its cotemporaries! I am impatient to see your sermon—did you observe a passage in the Fast-service that has diverted people much, as it came out just after the *nemine contradicente* on the pacific bills. "Then all the people shall say *after the minister,* turn us O Lord, and so shall we be turned."

I am tempted to sign my name in French, for the pleasure of quoting the following lines from Voltaire's Indiscret, the ridiculous parts of which suit me exactly;

TRASIMON.

'le vieux Seigneur Horace
M'a prié.——

DAMIS.

Voilà bien de quoi je m'embarasse
Horace est un vieux fou, plutôt qu'un vieux seigneur
Tout chamarré d'orgueil, pétri d'un faux honneur
Assez bas à la cour, important à la ville
Et non moins ignorant qu'il veut paroitre habile.

HORACE.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Monday night late.
March 16, 1778.

I had not seen the Morning Post, when I dissuaded Publication, you certainly have had provocation, if you are inclined to take it, I trust at least your testimony will not be lost — perhaps the present instant is not the fittest, as the French embassador's declaration has engaged all attention; I mean as far as a first moment can do, for in two days I suppose we shall be as thoughtless as ever — nay, they who should be most alarmed, seem besotted — indeed they had little way to go — but an old regiment is to sail to-morrow for Halifax. I went out of town on Saturday morning not knowing of the French declaration; it followed me to Strawberry that night, yet as if I were a minister, I did not return till this afternoon; and as both houses are sitting could get no further intelligence. I shall probably hear something before this sets out, but what can I learn that I do not know? the alternative is to be buffetted by France and turn tother cheek, or to have England and Ireland invaded — I could almost wish the storm would burst on Scotland — but who would go thither? there is one consolation however in our wretched state; it had been ten thousand times more grievous to have America conquered and England enslaved; and the guilty will now be the greatest sufferers. Nay, October was twelvemonth, I

should have jumped at an option of the present moment. In short we are disgraced and ruined, and shall never be what we have been — but Scotland will not triumph — I know not whether the ministers will endeavour to hold their places six months longer by the favour of France; or whether Lord Chatham's old crutch will be sent for to draw a circle round St. James's. I expect nothing but patching and botching from any body, which will suit the insensibility of the times. There are no grounds for confidence any where. We shall moulder piecemeal into our insignificant islandhood, for it is an age for vigorous resurrection. I will go answer the rest of your letter before I go to bed, that I may not dream of our shameful position nor have visions of revival that will never be realized.

You accuse me very unjustly of neglecting your alteration of my tragedy, I always thought it magic, to be effected by so few words and should have adopted it, had I ever had thoughts of its being represented; but nothing could induce me to venture it on the stage, not from superabundant modesty, but from the abusive spirit of the times, I have no notion of presenting one's self coolly to a savage mob to be torn to pieces — and you know I am as tender of my friends as of myself. I think this country at present in every light the sink of Europe, void of taste and of every thing ingenuous. Calamity has often resuscitated its powers — but there are few or no instances I believe of an empire that has fallen by its own corruptions, replacing itself on its throne. My vanity is too proud to desire to twinkle

under the auspices of Palæologi and Porphyrogeniti, should I be remembered, I should wish it might be as one of the last reign.

I have entirely forgotten what Sir John Dalrymple said in his preface, but am most sure that if he quotes a Walpole as his recommender, it must have been my cousin Thomas, for I never saw the wretch, nor ever had the most indirect connection with him. To Mrs. Macaulay I did give a letter, but am ashamed of it, as she ought to be of her foolish and absurd summary, which is a wretched compilation from magazines, full of gross mistakes, and confounding all characters, levelling all for no end or purpose, but to support so silly an hypothesis, as that no king can be a good king, because he is a king. She defends James II for the nonsensical pleasure of abusing King William, and has no more idea of general merit than Sir John Dalrymple. In short, whom does she approve but herself and her idolater — that dirty disappointed hunter of a mitre, Dr. Wilson, and Alderman Heathcote, a paltry worthless Jacobite, whom I remember, and her own grandfather Sawbridge, who, *she has been told* was a mighty worthy man though dipped in the infamous job of the South Sea. In short, I ran through the book, had forgotten it, and only recollect it now to answer your question.

I enclose with this a letter I wrote to you last week, but did not care to send by the post; you will find some curious particulars in it. I have finished certain verses of which you saw part, but shall reserve them

till we meet, as I shall the rest of my paper till to morrow. By the way, I do not know who the transcriber of your sermon is, nor guess what you mean by "the triumph of the minority," unless you allude to their carrying one question against Lord North for a tax on places. It would have been a greater blow to the crown than they will ever give, even if they become the majority; but they lost it the next night, on the report, and will take care not to carry it, if ever they are ministers.

17th.

Lord Stormont is recalled, for we are to be angry, since being tame would not do. Dr. Franklin is to be received at Versailles to day as Embassador. A message is to be delivered to each house to day, and the majority in each is, I suppose, to answer,—We will assist you to chastize France for having been forced by you to pick up what you threw away. Lord North had the modesty yesterday to recommend unanimity and to affirm he keeps his place from a point of honour. Burke made a fine application of Lord Bedford's answer to King James.—'I had a son who could have advised your majesty,'—America could have assisted your majesty. Charles Fox's reply was in a rougher style. The stocks are not of the heroic majority, yet, I believe the ministers will stay from errant fear at St. James's till they are torn out of it. That will be a poor compensation and an useless precedent, for posterity, with all its reading, is never the better for example.

James II could read, but could not remember even what he had seen.

Well! I must finish, though my pen's tongue could run on for ever, I feel all sort of feelings, none comfortable, but that we shall be despicable first before we are slaves; the contrary would be more mortifying. France has a right to humble us. The true English who are in America have behaved like Englishmen, without any Scot-alloy. The victories of France will be over Scots. Dr. Franklin's triumph has been over a Scot Ambassador. Pursue this idea, we shall have occasion to pay ourselves with leathern coin.

P. S. Let me know the moment you receive this packet. I add a French tract which you must take care to return, though I understand little of it. The *Gazette Litteraire* will show you how it relates to their present musical contests. What I understand is able and full of address, but surely the irony is above most readers. I shall be glad to have all my gazettes again when you come this waywards.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, York, March 13, 1778.

I have often try'd, but could never make a riddle in my life, therefore I will not attempt to correct yours, but I have a better reason still. If I was to do it, 'tis ten to one but you have forgot that you ever writ

them, and consequently would not understand my corrections; you have served me in a similar sort once or twice before, nay, when I had the effronterie to make an alteration in your tragedy, which alteration you approved, you yet gave that alteration up merely because you had forgotten what that alteration was, which had it been attended to, would have secured your Mysterious Mother from the devout delicacy of Mrs. Delany; nay, would have made it "pit, box and gallery" with any tragedy ancient as Elfrida or modern as the Battle of Hastings.

Now to shew you how much I hold your critiques in devout memorial, I give you to know that I have locked up my sermon in my bureau till that goodly time shortly comes when we shall all be absolutely ruined, all but the said sermon which then will shine forth with redoubled lustre. But I also give you to know that when it does come forth every iota of it must stand as it is, for I hear it has been taken down in short hand, and there is a man here the son of a certain Baronet, (who did in safer times what Dr. Dodd was afterwards hanged for, and who is now as he ought to be a privy councellor) who is highly incensed at the said sermon. He wrote against Price, but was not read, and he aims at a place or pension because his father does not give him *de quoi vivre*, and I question not is the person who has called himself the congregation of York, vide Morning Post, March 10. Now this being the case you see, there can be no softnings whatever, which I am sorry for, more on your account than my own, for

I should certainly have spared Sir John Dalrymple had I then known (which his preface has since taught me) that you gave him recommendatory letters to France. However as I said before my unfortunate sermon is safe under lock and key, and shall remain so as long as possible, perhaps for ever, unless I be in self defence forced to produce it.

Pray is this triumph of the minority any triumph at all? and what say you to Mrs. Macaulay's late volume, to whom also you gave recommendatory letters to France. I beg your pardon, I believe it was Lord Harcourt and not you.

If you will please to send the *gazettes litteraires* to Mr. Stonhewer with directions to Charles Carter my painting servant to send them to me by the York Fly, I shall have them speedily. I left him in town to perfect himself in drawing at the Academy, and any thing you chuse to send he will convey speedily to me.

I am tired to death of my residence, the cold of the Minster is intolerable; I wish they would tax deans and chapters, and make them as unprofitable as pensions, that I might have an excuse for shrinking myself into my rectorial shell. By the way I meant nothing in the way of *nolo episcopari* in the sentence of my sermon which you objected to; I only did not wish to be a ways and means man, or a Doctor Price. A man may be a good bishop and be neither of these characters, so no more at present from yours entirely

W. MASON.

Pray erase with a pen (if you do not immediately burn this letter) the *scandalum magnatum* contained in the sentence about the Baronet.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

York, March 21, 1778.

I have just now received the parcel very safe with the two delightful letters inclosed; while I continue here any thing will be forwarded to me safely and expeditiously by sending them to Charles Carter. I am not so easily provoked as to change my mind for a flam in the Morning Post. I will at least stay to see who prints on the occasion before me; those that have preached before the Lords and Commons, not to mention St. James's, ought to take precedency of the press before him that only discoursed my Lord Mayor of York. The man I mean is a Mr. Goodrick son of a baronet, one of Lord Bingley's heirs;* he married a Dutch woman and wants to go abroad as an envoy.

Pray out of all charity and goodness write frequently to me at this crisis, though I can send you nothing in return. The more disinterested and like the tenor of the times will be your correspondence. The Post gives me not a moment more, and I must conclude yours as always

W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

March 26, 1778.

Though you have desired me to write often at this crisis, and though I am never penurious of my ink, I waited till I could send you something more than rumours. The darkness has not hung long without a thunder clap. France has stopped all our shipping in their ports, and the omniscient Lord Stormont himself has learnt *that* piece of news at Boulogne, being detained there by the embargo. It is also expected that the Spanish Chargé des Affaires will to day or to morrow compliment the king with an acknowledgement of the states of America, as civilly as Monsieur de Noailles did. It is even said that Portugal allows their title. Well, say you, and are not people frightened? what is to be done? Frightened; yes; some are, — some that are guilty and more that are innocent, most, not at all; for folly, that sees a ghost always tumbles down a precipice that is before its eyes. But you *will* have some answer, and I *must* tell you what is to be done; that is I must foresee, *not* what can be done, but what will be. I believe the oracle at Hayes has been consulted, but not having received *carte blanche*, shrouded its dignity in ambiguity. Perhaps to day more humble embassadors have been sent: I vow I do not know there have, but the event I guess. The god himself taking the form of his Pythonisse, and enveloped in flannels, that are the symbols of vast vigour of

mind beneath, will go to Buckingham-house, and finding full acquiescence to all his terms (by taking care to ask none really unpalatable) will then present a long list of names that are to be substituted to the proscribed. Lord Rockingham shall go to Ireland, the Duke of Richmond shall be this, Charles Fox shall be tother, Mr. Burke something else, &c. &c. &c. I mean after Lord Camden, Lord Shelburne, Barré, Dunning, and perhaps the Duke of Grafton have been appointed to the essential posts. "Certainly," will be the answers, "all are very proper." Madam, the priestess, then notifies to all the nominees the graces she has bestowed, and orders them to take possession of their several departments. They all laugh in her face and call her a foolish old beldame, and thus a weak opposition is more weakened. *The most concerned* is not very sorry, the only moment is lost; France will tell you the rest.

I sit resigned to our fate, for when one can do no good, and is but an individual, it is impertinent to be anything but passive. I am less alarmed too than I should be, because I had the same apprehensions above thirty years ago, and because I had then thirty years longer to live than I have now. In youth too imagination's wing flies as far as it can. Experience tells one that all does not happen that may. I think I shall outlive the storm and talk over the ruins; but in truth I believe they will be considerable. France seems to have waited with wise phlegm for the fullness of time, and we may expect that her blows will be stunning. My idea is that she will invade us here ostensibly, more

effectually in Ireland, in America and in the East; if she has success in all, and we none, why then Lord Mansfield will shake off his mortal coil, and persuade himself that he always meant the destruction of the house of Hanover, not its *unbounded* elevation. These are my sober cool opinions, I shall be glad to be a lying Prophet, for Jeremiah himself was a sad fellow if he comforted himself under captivity with the honour of having predicted it.

Yours ever

H. W.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, April 8, 1778.

Though my daily fellow-labourers of this morning will give you a minute account of the great event of yesterday, I should be a very negligent gazetteer if I took no notice of it. Lord Chatham fell in the Senate—not by daggers nor by the thunder of Lord Suffolk's eloquence. He had spoken with every symptom of debility, repeated his own phrases, could not recollect his own ideas, and which was no new practice, persisted in our asserting sovereignty over America, *though he could not tell by what means.* It was only new to confess his ignorance. The Duke of Richmond answered him with much decency and temper, though Lord Chatham had called *pursuit without means,* timid and pusillanimous conduct. The Earl was rising to

reply, but fell down in a second fit of apoplexy, with strong convulsions and slabbering at the mouth. I do not doubt but the Morning Post will allow the Duke more rhetoric than it ever acknowledged, in order to ascribe Lord Chatham's fall to his Grace's invectives — but he who is all tenderness and sensibility, was so affected, that at night the Duchess desired me not to name it — yet Lord Chatham is not dead and to day is better, if existing after two strokes can be called so. To be sure his biographer would have a fairer field, had he died in his vocation. In truth, I see no good he could have done, since he has embraced the idea of still conquering America — but much harm he must have occasioned had the court adopted him. Now I reckon him politically dead; he will probably neither recover strength or faculties, his family will if possible prevent his reappearance, and the court will scarce inoculate a half dead skeleton on their other infirmities. Lord Chatham certainly went to the house to express resentment at their having only dabbled with him indirectly, but his debility or perhaps some gleam of hope of being yet adopted, moderated his style — his water-gall Lord Temple was at his elbow.

I can tell you nothing definitive on war or peace. Pacification with France, and even with America has been much sounded these last days — probably to prop the stocks — but the selection of Governor Johnstone for one of the Commissioners, who even during all the late debates anathematized American independence, implies not only adherence to sovereignty but no thoughts

of change — of Johnstone it is enough to say that though a Scot in opposition, he never lost sight of the promised land.

You may thank me for so much politics when I am overwhelmed with other business, and have even the militia on my hands; my nephew is suddenly come to himself again — only to his former self, but I must not tap this chapter — I should be endless. He is gone to take the command of the Norfolk militia, and I am commissioned to dissuade him! *De profundis clamavi!* well, fortune has some justice and dispenses antidotes with poisons. The Duke of Gloucester's children are to have a parliamentary provision, and considering every thing, a very decent one. There is one thorn removed; I have recourse to my old anodynes, quartos, whenever I can snatch a moment. I have gone through Mr. Pennant's Welsh tour which is a patch work of all sorts of shreds stitched together with unpronounceable words, of DDwrr'rs and no vowels, so I do not remember much of what I cannot articulate. I have dipped into Mr. Warton's second volume which seems more unentertaining than the former. I perceive he excommunicates Rowley totally. Lord Hardwicke is to present us on Saturday with two volumes of State Papers — but with due circumspection keeps back his by far most curious letters. I have a long conversation with Dr. Robertson to relate to you, but must reserve for some moment of more leisure. It would not be time lost to come to me for a week and hear me exhaust my wallet — you must not reckon upon too distant

moments! my tattered frame grows weaker and weaker. I waste as few minutes as possible, but constant application of the mind to some duties or other will impair a memory that is enclosed in so frail an *etui*. Have you seen *the old Baron*, a gothic story, professedly written in imitation of Otranto, but reduced to reason and probability! It is so probable, that any trial for murder at the Old Bailey would make a more interesting story. Mrs. Barbut's fragment was excellent. This is a *caput mortuum*. Adieu. I have not a quarter of a minute to say more.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, April 18, 1778.

I am come hither like a good christian to pass in retreat the holy week before Easter, and the unholy week of Newmarket, which has almost beaten Easter out of the Calendar, and to which yet I would give a scripture appellation, and call it the *passover*. In these ten days I shall probably fulfil my promise of sending you the heads of my interview with Dr. Robertson: but I will tell you first the little else I have to say. Most people expect a French war — I still doubt it, I do not very well know why, but it does not seem a very decisive age; the Turks and Russians have not yet drawn blood. I take the emperor to be the most impatient to be a Cæsar, and his mother I suppose is very ready to employ him at a distance from home.

The Commissioners are gone, and Mr. Adams is arrived at Paris. As we do not know the amount of their treaty, all we do is in the dark. I suspect that Dr. Franklin has duped Governor Johnstone, and yet many a dishonest man has been made a fool, as well as many an honest one.

The opposition are notoriously split into two factions. Lord Shelburne heads the Chathamites, and puts me in mind of a French beggar, who asked charity as one of the *quinze vingt aveugles*; why, said the person he applied to, you are not blind! *helas, non, monsieur*, said the fellow, *je ne suis qu'un aspirant.*

The Foleys are at last likely to lose their cause by the indecent impetuosity of their partizans. If you have not seen it in the papers, you will — Oh! I have begun my letter on a torn sheet, but I cannot write it over again, and so shall proceed — yes, you will thank me for an admirable bon mot of George Selwyn, when the Foleys had more chance of cancelling their father's will, he said, "the new Testament will now be more favourable to the Jews than the old."

There is a pretty poem just published called the Wreath of Fashion; it is written by one Tickell, a son of Addison's friend. He has been an assistant at Eton, and wrote this winter another poem at least as good, called the Project. The conclusion of the new is very inferior to the rest, and ends absurdly, like Anstey's on Lord Tavistock, with a hemistich; and as absurdly with a panegyric on that water-gruel, bard Shenstone, who never wrote any thing good but his Schoolmistress.

The Wreath is a satire on sentimental poets, amongst whom, still more absurdly, he classes Charles Fox, but there is a great deal of wit *par cy-par la.* He calls sentimental comedies, *Dramatic Homelies;* says Lord Palmerstone *fineers* (what an admirable word !) rebus's and charades with chips of poetry; and when Lord of the Admiralty, like Ariel wrecked navies with a song, sure that is an excellent application.

I have very near finished Warton, but antiquary as I am, it was a tough atchievement. He has dipped into an incredible ocean of dry and obsolete authors of the dark ages, and has brought up more rubbish than riches, but the latter chapters, especially on the progress and revival of the theatre is more entertaining; however it is very fatiguing to wade through the muddy poetry of three or four centuries that had never a poet.

Have you heard how Voltaire has been at his own Apotheosis? he has literally been crowned with laurel in a side box at his Irene, and seen the actors and actresses decorate his bust with garlands on the stage. As he is so very old one must excuse his submitting to this vanity; nay it must have been moving, — yet one is more charmed with the *violette, qui se cache sous l'herbe.*

As Lord and Lady Strafford are to drink tea here this evening I shall desire my Lord to frank this modicum, that you may not pay for a scrap that has nothing in it. My conversation with the Scottish historian is as little worth, especially after I had pre-

pared you for expecting it. When do you quit your cathedral for your parish? I shall not leave my little hill for the dinner at the Royal Academy on Thursday, only to figure the next day in the newspapers in the list of the Mecœnas's of the age. Lady Di Beauclerc has drawn the portrait of the Duchess of Devonshire and it has been engraved by Bartolozzi. A Castalian nymph conceived by Sappho and executed by Myron would not have had more grace and simplicity; it is the divinity of Venus piercing the veil of immortality, when

> roseâ cervice refulsit,
> Ambrosiæque comæ divinum vertice odorem
> Spiravere.

The likeness is perfectly preserved, except that the paintress has lent her own expression to the Duchess, which you will allow is very agreeable flattery; what should I go to the Royal Academy for? I shall see no such *chef d'œuvres* there.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

May 12, 1778.

I now and then write a letter for, rather than to you: that is when they will bear delay and be equally fresh, and when they contain anecdotes that I do not care to send by the post if they are too personal, and I have not a prospect of sudden conveyance. The following will have all these ingredients, and will rather be an epitome

of the manners of the time, than a letter. The characteristics of the age are frenzy, folly, extravagance and insensibility; no wonder when such stars are predominant, that Ruin both stalks on, and is not felt or apprehended.

About ten days ago I wanted a housemaid and one presented herself very well recommended; I said, "but young woman, why do you leave your present place?" she said she could not support the hours she kept, that her lady never went to bed till three or four in the morning. "Bless me child, said I, why you tell me you live with a Bishop's wife, I never heard that Mrs. North gamed or raked so late." "No Sir," said she, "but she is three hours undressing." Upon my word, the edifice that takes three hours to demolish, must at least be double the time in fabricating! would not you for once sit up till morning to see the destruction of the Pyramid and distribution of the materials? Do not mention this, for I did not take the girl and she still assists at the daily and nightly revolutions of Babel.

On Tuesday I supped after the opera at Mrs. Meynel's with a set of the most fashionable company, which take notice I very seldom do now, as I certainly am not of the age to mix often with young people, Lady Melbourne was standing before the fire, and adjusting her feathers in the glass, says she, "Lord! they say the stocks will blow up: that will be very comical."

These would be features for comedy, if they would not be thought caricatures, but to day I am possessed

of a genuine paper that I believe I shall leave to the Museum, and which though its object will I suppose to-morrow become record, cannot be believed authentic an hundred years hence. It would in such a national satire as Gulliver be deemed too exaggerated; in short Lord Foley and his brother have petitioned the House of Lords to set aside their father's will, as it seems he intended to have raised an hundred thousand pounds to pay their debts, but died before he could execute his intention. All the ladies, Melbournes, and all the Bishop's wives that kill their servants by vigils are going about the town lamenting these poor orphans, and soliciting the peers to redress their grievances; but no words no ridicule can attain to the ridiculous pathetic of the printed case itself, which now lies before me, and of which the four first lines are these — upon my honour they are exactly these.

"The present Lord Foley, and his brother Mr. Edward Foley having contracted large bond debts to the amount of about — *l.* and encumbered themselves by granting annuities for their lives to the amount of about seventeen thousand four hundred and fifty pounds a *year*, explained their situation to their father the late Lord."——

Poor unfortunate children; before thirty, the eldest had spent an estate (to the possession of which he was not arrived) of twenty thousand a year — at least, forfeited his father's affections, who left him but six thousand a year and a palace; and the youngest brother had been dipped in the same extravagance with him,

and the legislature is desired to set aside so just a punishment, and if it does will deserve that every lad in England should waste his father's estate before his face,—tell it not in Gath, where all the shekels that ever were in the country would give no idea of the debt, though Jews are the creditors. Burn your sermon instead of printing it; do you think you can preach up to the enormities of the times? Hyperbole is baffled, and if the fine ladies of Jerusalem were so galant that the prophets were obliged to pass all bounds of decency in censuring Duchess Aholah and Countess Aholibah, where would they have found figures even in eastern rhetoric to paint the enormity of two sons *explaining to their father* that they paid seventeen thousand pounds a year to usurers for money they had borrowed to pay gaming debts? and what tropes, what metaphors drawn from asses would describe a sanhedrim that suffered such a petition to be laid before it.

These have been my collections in a single fortnight in the flagrancy of a civil war. History shall not revert to Athens for decrees against diverting the revenues of the theatre to the service of the state. London shall be the storehouse hereafter, whence declamations shall be drawn on the infatuation of falling empires; nay, so potent is the intoxication that in two companies this evening I have been thought singular for seeing *this petition* in the light I do; at York perhaps I may not be held so antediluvian in my opinions. With such obsolete prejudices I certainly am not very proper at modern suppers, yet with such *entremets* one

would not wholly miss them. Nations at the acme of their splendour, or at the eve of their destruction, are worth observing. When they grovel in obscurity afterwards, they furnish neither events nor reflections; strangers visit the vestiges of the Acropolis, or may come to dig for capitals among the ruins of St. Paul's; but nobody studies the manners of the pedlars and banditti, that dwell in mud huts within the precincts of a demolished temple. Curio and Clodius are memorable as they paved the way to the throne of Cæsar, but equal scoundrels are not intituled to infamy after a constitution is overturned; what we shall retain, I do not conjecture. The constitution might recover, the nation cannot: but though its enemies have miscarried in their attacks on the former is there sense or virtue enough left to restore it, though the assailants have betrayed such wretched despicable incapacity? unless sudden inspiration should seize the whole island and make it with one voice invite Dr. Franklin to come over and new model the government, it will crumble away in the hands that still hold it; they feel, they own their insufficiency. Every body is sensible of it, and every body seems to think like Lady Melbourne, that if we are blown up it will be very comical.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, May 15, 1778.

I have gulped my anger at your silence, or at least

adjourned it till I have less disposition to speak, that I may chat with you on all that has happened since I wrote last Saturday. The first thing I heard on landing in Arlington Street was Lord Chatham's death, which in truth I thought of no great consequence, but to himself; for either he would have remained where he was, or been fetched out to do what he could not do, — replace us once more on the throne of Neptune. The House of Commons has chosen to make his death an epoch, which is to draw the line between our prosperity and adversity. They bury him, and father his children. In this fit of gratitude two men chose not to be involved, but voted against attending his funeral; one was the Archbishop of Canterbury, who owed the tiara to him; the other, Lord Onslow, who formerly used to wait in the lobby to help him on with his great coat.

Yesterday teemed with events: a compromise on the Irish bills was made and broken. Then Sir George Saville moved for taking off pressures from the Roman Catholics, which charmed every soul on both sides, and I suppose the papists will soon be admitted *ad eundem.*

Next arrived General Burgoyne. I don't know whether he was surprized or not, but he received a prohibition of appearing at court; and a board of general officers is appointed to sit on his conduct. Luckily we have enough to spare, though French and Spaniards should land in twenty places; for next came an account of Marshal Broglio being appointed commander-in-chief on the coasts of the ocean. The *ubi*

of the Toulon Squadron is not ascertained. That of Brest has thirty frigates, and the Spanish ten thousand men on board, so you may prophecy at your pleasure.

I say nothing of an interlude which nobody has leisure to think on, and is a great way off in a certain little empire we have, or had, called India, where Mr. Hastings had deposed General Clavering by the plenitude of his power before the latter's death.

I thought these accidents were sufficient for one week, and came out of town this morning as tranquilly as if I were a minister; so I hold my own philosophy full as high as any stoic's in Yorkshire. It does require some command of temper to sit still and see a general wreck approaching, — I mean for one that expects and thinks on it. I know I might go to Ranelagh, and Newmarket, and exhibitions, and say, with Pope,

Whatever is, is right.

But I am forced to seek other consolations; and as I have not the spirits of youth, I have recourse to age, and comfort myself that my time cannot be long whether I survive my country or the constitution, the former of which is alternately shaken or attempted to be propped by experiments on the latter; but it is idle to dream on old maxims. A great convulsion is at hand, and new æras find new levels. Old folks should not trouble themselves with great epochs at the end of their lives, but set themselves apart till they are swept to the ancient mass to which they belonged.

I have long taken my doctor's degree in Strulbruggism,

and wonder I concern myself about the affairs of the living. Good night, I will go and converse with the dead.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

May 16, 1778.

As a Goth, as a respecter of princes of the name of William and as uncle of one of that name, I certainly shall not refuse my mite to the re-enshrinement of the bones of poor William of Hatfield. I will willingly be at the whole expence if you will take care I shall have no honour from it, as I hate crouding one's name into Fame's account book, by bringing her in a bill for stone and mortar; you shall have his Royal Highness's arms too, and anything but the epitaph. I have neither time nor understanding left for writing any thing. My nephew's situation will employ and poison all my leisure; and were it not my way to occupy every minute, I could not go through half I have to do, and all I wish to do I leave undone. If I forget Prince William's arms, you must put me in mind.

In all my trouble I cannot be forgetful of you. Here is come out a paltry supplement to Hume's life, with his will, a supplement to his vanity. He modestly orders only his name to be mentioned on his tomb, but appoints posterity his executors, and requires them to write an epitaph setting forth his great abilities according to the high opinion they will have of them. *Voilà*

un Philosophe. The editor grossly abuses you for what I hope you glory in, the publication of Gray's letters, in particular that which censures Hume, which the fool calls illiberal. By Hume's own account of himself he attacked all religion in order to be talked of. It is *illiberal* in a very moral man to be shocked at Atheism! This is Scotch morality! The condemnation of Gray's letters is Scotch taste! The whole nation hitherto has been void of wit and humour, and even incapable of relishing it. The dull editor says Gray never thought his letters would see the light. He does not perceive how much that circumstance enhances their merit; I do not wonder he is insensible of their charming beauties. Nobody yet ever wrote letters so well and his earliest have more marks of genius than his latest. Your crime does not lie in what you have given of Gray but of yourself. The Scots like to wound with another man's dagger; you will only smile at their impotence. I wish they could only stab with their pens,—

> The grey-goose quill that is thereon,
> In no man's blood will be wet,

I know no news. You have seen the Speaker's remonstrance, and how ably Charles Fox made the House adopt it, and consequently the condemnation of their own act.

I have seen Sheridan's new comedy, and liked it much better than any I have seen since the Provoked Husband. There is a great deal of wit and good situations; but it is too long, has two or three bad

scenes that might easily be omitted, and seemed to me to want nature and truth of character; but I have not read it, and sat too high to hear it well. It is admirably acted. Burke has published a pamphlet on the American War, and an Apology for his own secession and that of his friends. I have not had time to look at it, but I do not believe I shall agree with him on the latter part so much as on the first. Do not return me the Incas; I shall never read it. I hear your garden was criticized in the Morning Post. Continue to plant

Flowers worthy of paradise,—

and do not mind their being trampled on in such a soil as this. Adieu! I wish I had leisure to chat with you longer.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, May 24, 1778.

I have got a quire of much smaller paper than I formerly used, though not quite so small as that you write letters upon, and I am in great hopes it will make me a much more punctual correspondent to you and the rest of my friends; for when a man has nothing to say (which is usually my case) there is nothing so formidable as seeing a huge quarto page, big enough for the types of a Scotch historian, lie before one in expectation of being filled. I know I have frequently taken one of those out of my *porte feuille* and put it in again through pure disgust at its magnitude. Pray, who is

your stationer? His Majesty has been mine a great while (through the mediation of Mr. Auditor Stonhewer) but I'll turn him off and take yours, and yet, when one considers that it is the only thing by which he has ever benefitted me, or will be likely to benefit me, this would be quarrelling with one's bread and butter.

Thus the apologetical first page, the most difficult to write in a whole letter, is fairly filled, and the second begun; shall I fill this with a threnody on the two Earls which have lately left my stationer in the lurch? Their characters are too dissimilar to be hitched into the same rhymes, and yet they both agreed in one virtue,— that of a most profound loyalty. The latter of these, with whom only I was acquainted, lamented the republican spirit that was abroad, in the last conference I had with him. I did not ask him what he meant by it, because I was sure he could not tell me. But are you not charmed with the Cavendishes getting up to praise the dead statesman? whom I know they hated as cordially as the King hates them. I always thought Lord John rather a modest man till this event; and are not you charmed too with the political wisdom of Sir George Saville, who chooses this very moment to indispose the whole body of Dissenters towards him and his party by rising up the champion of the Papists. Bad as I esteem the reigning ministry, I actually like them better than the opposition,— I mean the Rockingham part of it, and yet all my friends are included in that part.

Pray, give me an account of the funeral, and if you

have time, order your gardener to pluck a bouquet of onions, and send it with my compliments to Lord John, that he may put them in his handkerchief to weep with greater facility. I am sick of my friends, my country and myself. They say we are to be invaded: I am as impatient to be so as the old nun in the Pucelle was to be violated; well; but if we are not invaded, will you meet me in a little time at Nuneham. I mean to go there the middle of next month and stay till August. I had once thought of passing through town, but the absence of my curate I believe will prevent me, for he is now setting off with Lord H.'s corpse to Hornby, and is to return to town to settle some affairs relative to the lease of Sion Hill with the Duke of Northumberland. You may well believe that I can contentedly stay here, when I reflect that a great part of the trouble and attendance that now falls upon him would have been my lot had things been as they once were. But my little quarto page happily releases you from more of my prate and leaves me no room to say how much I am yours.

You talked in your last of a letter you had written last Saturday, I hope you was only *ironing*, for I have only received one since I came hither from York.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, May 31, 1778.

I am glad you have deigned to answer me at last, for there is no conversation when only one talks. I was almost sorry that I had not begged you to order your executor to send me word you was dead, and that I need not write any more. But, my good friend, you are full as great a contradiction as Lord John, or any catholic whig upon earth. You write once in a quarter, and yet complain of my small paper; I fixed upon this little quarto for substantial reasons. I am too apt to write too much to those I love, and prescribed myself this size that I might not weary them, and it holds all one has to say to those one loves not, and yet seems to contain a decent quantity.

I should like to accept the assignation you give me, and will if I have the least encouragement, but I have had no invitation; and though I do not at all know why, am a little suspicious of not being in the most perfect favour. As this is by no means positive, I take no notice, because it is not at all on my side, and that it shall revive when ever it pleases, as my regard is just the same. If we should not meet I think you cannot refuse coming to me for a few days. Consider, I have turned that corner beyond which every hour is *lucrum*, and that I and every body else think I have lived long enough—though I am not so old as Sam: Martin counts me. The talisman is removed that prohibited your

access to this part of the world, though surely Twickenham is a kind of country to so near relation of Pope as you are by the side of your virgin-mothers; let me have the satisfaction of seeing you here, whither very few are pressed to come. We have a thousand things to talk over, and are almost reduced to be the only two of the same opinion, for what those you call your friends mean, indeed I do not guess, it is most charitable to think they have no meaning. I used to fancy that calamity would bring us to our senses — it must bring our senses too. The two alternatives now are desolation, or a shameful peace: bankruptcy with either, only a little nearer, or a little farther off; it is actually come out on the agitation of the changes in the law that at £60 per commission, the chancellor reaped seven thousand pounds last year by bankruptcies. Those changes were to have taken place last Thursday, but I do not hear they did. Thurloe is to be Lord Chancellor or Lord Keeper, I do not know which. Wedderburne sits down with the Attorney's place, a disappointment and I suppose a full promise. Norton threatened to impeach him if Peered, for telling the chief justice that Lord North would pay him out of the treasury seven thousand pounds for the prothonotary's reversion. Thus justice makes a rope of one rogue, instead of using two ropes. I shall certainly not go to the funeral — I go to no puppet shows, nor want to see Lord Chatham's water-gall Lord Temple hobble chief mourner. I scarce inquire after the House of Commons, which is a scene of folly and Billinsgate. Burgoyne has tried to be the

pathetic hero, and was forgotten for three hours, while Temple Lutterel, and Lord G. Germaine scolded like two oyster women; the first tried to be sent to Newgate, and the latter grasped his sword, and then asked pardon for having been grossly affronted. Lord Barrington implored madam his country's tears for declaring he was retiring from her service to virtuous privacy. It is pity she did not order him to be buried at the public expence; Lord Sandwich has run the gauntlet in the Lords for all the lies he has told all the winter about the fleet, and does not retire, but I am sick of repeating what you must be sick of reading. An invasion will have some dignity; but to see a great country gambol at the eve of ruin like a puppy on a precipice! Oh! one cannot buffoon like Lucian when one wants to speak daggers like Tacitus, and couch them in a sentence without descending to details.

I had rather talk on less interesting subjects, and will tell you a good bon mot. *Marie a la Coque* has had an outrageous quarrel with Miss Pelham on politics, or rather at Miss Pelham, who did not reply. This occasioned Lady Mary's notes being mentioned, which she signs as Duchess of York, Marye, the *e* passing for a flourish, if you do not go to law with her. On this, Burke said to Miss P. "Upon my word you will be a match for her if you sign Frances P."

There was more humour in a reply of Lady Harrington's tother day. Mrs. St. John had asked Lady Anna Maria to a ball without her mother, who would not let her go. The next time they met Lady H. made

excuses, but said she never allowed her daughter to go to balls without her. Mrs. St. J. replied, as her ladyship suffered her to go the opera without her, she had hoped she would not have been more strict about a private dancing. Instead of knocking her down, as might have been expected, Lady Harrington looked her all over, and then with a face melted to compassion, said in a soft voice, and very slowly, "Mrs. St. John, if you *could* have a child, I am sure you would think as I do!" Imagine this addressed to a porpoise covered with flowers and feathers! but I would in vain divert you, I do not feel cheerful, though, as I told you in a former letter, I had rather see my country humbled than insolently enslaved. Nay, I think with comfort on a time which I shall not see, when the absurdity of the present age will be painted in its true colours. The mind never rests on the unhappy point; it prefers a non-existent scene to disagreeable sensations; I feel my own folly; were I to leave England as happy or as glorious as I have known it, would it always remain so? Is not it enough that the mischief is falling on the heads of its authors? what period equalled the disgraces of the last six or eight months? shall the innocent mix sighs with the guilty? who will doubt where the blame is due? all the Robertsons and Humes of the Highlands cannot whitewash the four last years; nor, which is more delightful, can they plunder and disgrace America, as their chiefs have undone England. Seven James's were not worse politicians than the whole nation is; nor is there a more indelible mark of

reprobation on the Jews. I would fain persuade myself that the seeds of tyranny will not thrive in this country, though all the inhabitants sow them. Every attempt choaks the seedsman; I hope we shall be a proverb, as Ireland is for not producing venemous animals!

Remember that if I write on small paper I write a very small hand, and that this very letter would make forty, if I scrawled a large character like Dukes and old Earls, who allow as much room to every word as to their coach and six. I don't want news, but you can say nothing that I shall not be glad to read.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, June 10, 1778.

If you wonder you have not heard from me *voici pourquoi*. I might plead business, but though I have enough, that was not the impediment. The true reason why I have not written was, because I have. I wrote to you above a week agone intending Mr. Montagu should be the bearer, and gave it to Mr. Stonhewer, but lo! his friend was set out, and the former returned my epistle to me. As the news it contained would be still-born; instead of being so lazy as to send it, I begin anew.

You now know all the history of your warlike Metropolitan Archbishop Turpin. I hope he made his entrance into his capital by beat of drum, if he attains what he deserves, and perhaps ambitions, a red hat,

I shall beg to present him with that of his predecessor, Wolsey, out of my own museum; but I hope he will never be able to say with that son of a butcher, and with equal foundation from his pulpit, *Ego et Rex meus*. My brother, who is no American, is exceedingly scandalized at this champion of high church. This vulture has been so plumed in both his flights, that I fancy his successor will learn to mix the prudence of the serpent with the timidity of the dove, and creep on his belly instead of soaring.

Your adversary Murray is a blackguard, you may bear to have filth thrown at you, when it is at the Duchess of Devonshire and at the youngest and handsomest women in town. It is a polished — sweet tempered age.

What care you about all the new promotions? or what cares any body but the promoted and the disappointed? one of the latter Lord Howe is the only one worth naming. He expected to be treasurer of the navy, because the appointments of Commanders-in-chief and Embassadors, are not sufficient to content that family. Their sister declares the quarrel is irreconcileable. It is a disinterested age.

I send you six *Gazettes Litteraires*, you needed not to celebrate the conveyance. Mr. S[tonehewer] and I do not reckon you the pink of discretion.

I have almost finished the first volume of Dr. Robertson. The materials are well put together, and it is a book that must please any body to whom the matter is new. In short, it is not all so and though

the arrangement is good, I see no genius nor shrewdness, none of that penetration that shone in the history of Scotland and totally left him in his Charles 5th. Two expressions have shocked me, speaking of that indefatigable good man Las Casas, who laboured to rescue the poor Americans from the tyranny of their conquerors, the Doctor calls it a *bustling* activity, and says he was ashamed to show his face after the fatal termination of his *splendid* schemes; what epithets for so humane a design! Could Archbishop Markham in a sermon before the Society for propagation of the Gospel by fire and sword, paint charity in more contemptuous terms? It is a Christian age.

I retract saying I have found nothing new; I did not know that great part of the Spanish clergy adopted the compassion of Las Casas. I did not know that Las Casas, and there he was culpably bustling indeed! suggested the idea of supplying the Spanish settlements with African slaves. This was guilt with a witness, for any lucrative mischief has fifty times more chance of being adopted, than a humane plan that combats interest. What contradictions we are! Las Casas had reason not to show face, not because the one scheme failed, but because the other succeeded. Is not he a fine historian who insinuates that a virtuous man ought to blush if the perversity of the age defeats his efforts to correct it? The doctrine no doubt will be applauded by all who have rendered *Patriots* an opprobrious term for those who laboured to prevent the effusion of English and American blood. It is a tender-hearted age.

My nephew continues sullen and calm. This saves me alarms though not business and fatigue, yet I can get repose here, and now and then a moment to amuse myself; my Beauclerc Tower is almost finished. Adieu.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, June 26, 1778.

Mr. Nicholl has been here, and tells me he has seen you, and that you have not been well, for which I am very sorry indeed. He says York disagreed with you, and that you will go thither no more in winter. The rest of his account was much more welcome: that you have made charming progress in your third book, and inserted divine lines on Gray. Them I do thirst to see, and trust I shall ere many moons have put on their nightcaps; for Lord Harcourt has asked me to meet you at Nuneham. When it is to be I don't know, for they are going or gone into Sussex; but if you can cast a figure and guess, I beg you to give me a hint, though nothing shall prevent my being faithful to that assignation, but my lord and master, gout, whose commands however I do not expect.

Well; the signal is fired. Admiral Keppel has had a smart skirmish with three frigates of the Brest squadron, and has sent one of them in. They fired first, and yet seem to have provoked him that they may plead, we began the war. I trouble myself mighty little about what their majesties the kings of Europe

will say on these punctilios over their coffee. We, the Achivi, are to be the sufferers, and particularly we the Achivi of these islands. In truth Agamemnon himself will be no great gainer, nor be gathered to the Atridæ with quite so many crowns on his head as they bequeathed to him, and he will wish he had not worn that of Caledonia!

I know nothing else; but what a volume in that *else!* you bards that can prophecy with the lyre in your hand have

ample scope and verge enough,

for pouring out odes full of calamity and of *funera Dardanæ genti.* Distress is already felt; one hears of nothing but of the want of money; one sees it every hour. I sit in my blue window and miss nine in ten of the carriages that used to pass before it. Houses sell for nothing, which, two years ago, nabobs would have given lacks of diamonds for. Sir Gerard Vanneck's house and beautiful terrace on the Thames, with forty acres of ground, and valued by his father at twenty thousand pounds, was bought in last week at six thousand. Richmond is deserted; an hundred and twenty coaches used to be counted at the church door, there are now twenty; I know nobody that grows rich but Margaret. This Halcyon season has brought her more customers than ever, and were any thing to happen to her, I have thoughts, like greater folk, of being my own minister and showing my house myself. I don't wonder *your garden* has grown in such a summer, and I am glad it has, that our taste in gardening may

be immortal in verse, for I doubt it has seen its best days! Your poem may transplant it to America, whither our best works will be carried now, as our worst used to be. Do not you feel satisfied in knowing you shall be a classic in a free and rising empire? Swell all your ideas, give a loose to all your poetry; your lines will be repeated on the banks of the Oroonoko; and which is another comfort, Ossian's Dirges will never be known there. Poor Strawberry must sink in *fœce Romuli;* that melancholy thought silences me. Good night.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Wentworth Castle, July 1, 1778.

I have had no occurrence in my progress or pilgrimage through this valley of life (to speak in the style of John Bunyan) worth mentioning since I wrote last, except peradventure the attending at Horaby Castle, and saying "dust to dust" over Lord Holdernesse's remains might be thought worth the notifying to you, but when I consider that you did not seem to interest yourself much in the funeral of Lord Chatham, I suspect my poor Earl's would not be thought of much consequence by you. Indeed nobody of any rank ever seems to have stolen out of life in a more *incog* manner than he has done, for all-Frenchman as he was, Voltaire would hinder his being talked about, even on his darling continent. So that what with Lord Chatham's death

here and Voltaire's death there, his memory seems to have slipt between two stools, and so rest his soul, if Doctor Priestly chooses to let him have one, whether material or not is not in his case much material; excuse the pun for the sake of the sense if you be candid enough so to do.

My expedition to Nuneham is put off *sine die*; it is not the fashion to begin one's summer till autumn, and Lord Harcourt you know always chooses to be in the fashion. Next year I trust our summers will be in the winter, for as our days are in the night, and consequently our noons at midnight, our seasons are but half the thing during the present ton and I like consistency in all matters; I hope however to pass some of my dog-days about the beginning of next December at Strawberry, and have made up a light fustian frock for the purpose. My present noble host you know is the very reverse of all this: his seasons go by clockwork, and that clockwork as old as Tompion's. I came here last Monday, and shall return to my flock on Saturday. His lordship and her ladyship are much yours, and bid me say so. The latter I think a most excellent woman, and somewhat different from the De la Coque you mention; but I think I can account for this difference in a manner not very flattering to the sex.

Sappho is almost finished, and satisfies me better than my own things usually do, but I fear I grow like old fathers, who like their children whom they get after fifty much better than those they got at five-and-twenty,

because they are proofs of their vigour. To be sure in the eye of episcopacy, I might full as venially have begat a child upon the body of my chambermaid as this upon my brain. A parson writing an amorous opera is a phenomenon more horrid I trust in that eye than the growth of popery. But *macte virtute*; the deed is done, and I am ready to abide by the consequences.

Pray send me all the anecdotes you have concerning the latter end of Voltaire, and tell me whether opium or old age killed him, for I do not depend on newspapers when I am able to get Mad. Dudeffand's intelligence at such a second hand as yours. I rest in hopes that we shall meet at Nuneham the beginning of September, for I fancy by that time his lordship will be there to pluck his first violets. I am, as always,

yours most truly

W. MASON.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

July 4, 1778.

Children break their playthings to see the inside of them. Pope thought superior beings looked on Newton but as a monkey of uncommon parts, would not he think that we have been like babies smashing an empire to see what it was made of? Truly I doubt whether there will be a whole piece left in three months, the conduct bears due proportion to the incapacity. You

ought to be on the spot to believe it. When Keppel's messenger Mr. Berkeley arrived, neither the first Lord of the Admiralty nor the secretary was to be found! and now Mr. Keppel is returned we learn that the East and West India fleets, worth four millions, are at stake, and the French frigates are abroad in pursuit of them. Yesterday the merchants were with Lord North to press Keppel might sail again against a superior fleet! forty thousand men are on the coast, and transports assembling in every port, and nothing but incapacity and inability in all this, and not a grain of treachery.

General Howe is arrived and was graciously received. The agreeable news he brought is, that Clinton for want of provisions has abandoned Philadelphia and marched through the Jerseys to New York without molestation, on condition of not destroying Philadelphia. The congress has ratified the treaty with France, and intend to treat the commissioners *de haut en bas* unless you chuse to believe the Morning Post, who says five provinces declare for peace. I told you lately my curiosity to know what is to be left to us at a general peace. The wisest thing the ministers could do would be to ask that question incontinently. I am persuaded in the present apathy that the nation would be perfectly pleased, let the terms be what they would. A series of disasters may spoil this good humour, and there often wants but a man to fling a stone to spread a conflagration. The treasury is not rich enough at present to indemnify the losers of four millions; the stock holders

are two hundred and forty thousand, and the fraction, forty thousand would make an ugly mob; in short, tempests that used to be composed of irascible elements never had more provocation than they are likely to have; such is the glimpse of our present horizon. Now to your letter.

If your Mæcenas's fame is overwhelmed in Lord Chatham's and Voltaire's, it is already revenged on the latter's. Madame du Deffand's letter of to day says, he is already forgotten. *La belle poule* has obliterated him, but probably will have a contrary effect on Lord Chatham. All my old friend has told me of Voltaire's death is that the excessive fatigues he underwent by his journey to Paris, and by the bustle he made with reading his play to the actors and hearing them repeat it, and by going to it and by the crowds that flocked to him: in one word the agitation of so much applause at eighty-four threw him into a strangury, for which he took so much laudanum that his frame could not resist all, and he fell a martyr to his vanity; nay, Garrick, who is above twenty years younger, and as full as vain, would have been choaked with such doses of flattery; though he would like to die the death.

You, who are not apt to gape for incense, may be believed when you speak well of Sappho. I am sorry I must wait for the sight till Lord Harcourt proclaims summer. I enjoy the present, which I remember none like, but even this is clouded by the vexation of seeing this lovely island spoiled and sold to shame! I look at

our beautiful improvements, and sigh to think that they have seen their best days. Did you feel none of these melancholy reflections at Wentworth Castle? I wrote the Earl a letter two days ago that will not please him, but can one always contain one's chagrin when one's country is ruined by infatuation? No, we never can revive! We killed the hen that laid the golden eggs! The term *Great Britain* will be a jest. My English pride is wounded, yet there is one comfortable thought remains — when liberty was abandoned by her sons here, she animated her genuine children, and inspired them to chastize the traitor Scots that attacked her. *They* have made a blessed harvest of their machinations. If there is a drachm of sense under a crown, a Scot hereafter will be reckoned pestilential. Methinks the word Prerogative should never sound very delightful in this island; attempt to extend it and its fairest branches wither and drop off. What has an army of fifty thousand men fighting for sovereignty atchieved in America? retreated from Boston, retreated from Philadelphia, laid down their arms at Saratoga, and lost thirteen provinces! nor is the measure yet full! such are the consequences of our adopting new legislators, new historians, new doctors! Locke and Sidney, for Humes, Johnsones and Dalrymples! When the account is made up and a future historiographer royal casts up debtor and creditor, I hope he will please to state the balance between the last war *for America* and the present *against it.* The advantages of that we know, Quebec, the Havannah, Martinico, Guadeloupe, the East Indies, the French

and Spanish fleets destroyed &c. &c.; all the bills *per contra* are not yet come in! Our writers have been disputing for these hundred and sixty-six years on Whig and Tory principles. Their successors, who I suppose will continue the controversy, will please to allow at least that if the ministers of both parties were equally complaisant when in power, the splendour of the crown (I say nothing of the happiness of the people which is never taken into the account) has constantly been augmented by Whig administrations, and has faded (and then and now a little more) when Tories have governed! The reason is as plain: whig principles are founded on sense; a whig may be a fool, a tory must be so: the consequence is plain; a whig when a minister may abandon his principles, but he will retain his sense and will therefore not risk the felicity of his posterity by sacrificing every thing to selfish views. A tory attaining power hurries to establish despotism: the honour, the trade, the wealth, the peace of the nation, all are little to him in comparison of the despotic will of his master, but are not you glad I write on small paper!

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, July 16, 1778.

Though it is a most anxious moment I do not write to tell you or talk of politics, most men in these regions expect news of a battle at sea: I do not. As we have

nothing left to save but ourselves, *I wish theirselves* would leave themselves and us that little.

Jean Jacques is certainly dead as well as Voltaire; poor Charon! Fanny, blooming fair, died here yesterday of a stroke of palsy. She had lost her memory for some years, and remembered nothing but her beauty and not her methodism. Being confined with only servants, she was continually lamenting, "I to be abandoned that all the world used to adore!" she was seventy-two.

I received a letter this morning from the engraver of Johnson's Poets to enquire if I knew of any portrait of Dyer or Mallet. If the latter is one of Johnson's *Poets*, I do not wonder Gray was not.

The sun seems to be the only prince that is generous and sticks by us in our distress. People of all ages call it an old-fashioned summer, such as we used to have ten or twenty years ago, when you are to suppose they were young. I that do not haggle about my three scores, do not remember any such summer these fifty years. It is Italy in a green gown.

Mr. Nicholl and I went last week to see the new apartment at Osterley Park. The first chamber, a drawing-room, not a large one, is the most superb and beautiful that can be conceived, and hung with gobelin tapestry, and enriched by Adam in his best taste, except that he has stuck diminutive heads in bronze, no bigger than a half-crown, into the chimney-piece's hair. The next is a light plain green velvet bed-chamber. The bed is of green satin richly embroidered with

colours, and with eight columns; too theatric, and too like a modern head-dress, for round the outside of the dome are festoons of artificial flowers. What would Vitruvius think of a dome decorated by a milliner? The last chamber, after these two proud rooms, chills you: it is called the Etruscan, and is painted all over like Wedgwood's ware, with black and yellow small grotesques. Even the chairs are of painted wood. It would be a pretty waiting room in a garden. I never saw such a profound tumble into the Bathos. It is going out of a palace into a potter's field. Tapestry carpets, glass, velvet, satin, are all attributes of winter. There could be no excuse for such a cold termination, but its containing a cold bath next to the bed-chamber: — and it is called taste to join these incongruities! I hope I have put you into a passion.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, July 18, 1778.

As I was going out this evening I was stopped in Twickenham, and told that France has declared war. I knew the Brest squadron was at sea, and that Admiral Keppel, by letters received from him at the Admiralty on Thursday, is off the Land's End in hourly expectation of being joined by three or four men-of-war, which will make his fleet thirty ships of the line, with which he was determined to seek the enemy, who have thirty-

one, two of fifty guns, and eight frigates. Thus the battle may be fought as soon as war is proclaimed; and thus our ministers may have a full prospect of all their consummately wise measures may produce! What can be expected from two wars, when one has been so ignominious? —With an army of fifty thousand men against a rabble, and without being beaten, they have lost a whole continent, and near half that army, and retreated from place to place. Not one General has gained any reputation; our only fleet on this side of the world is to decide whether the two islands are not to be fought for on land. Thus have we, the people, been gamed for; and some few of us against our wills! It is very hard, especially on us that remember other days! I know not what Lord Mansfield's reflections are when he recollects his sagacious journey to Paris to convince the French cabinet that it was against their interest to protect the Americans and his famous passage of the Rubicon. I should be sorry to feel what he ought to feel even on the score of folly,—indeed defend it Numerus; and all that may be left to us few, may be to meet him, *torva tuentes* like the ghost of Dido.

England will one day recollect it had a minister, to whom it owed twenty years of prosperity and happiness, and who left it a motto that would have preserved such halcyon days. *Quieta non movere* was as wise a saying as any my Lord Bolinbroke bequeathed to my Lord Bute. I do not know whether it is true, what

has been said, that my father on being advised to tax America, replied, "It must be a bolder minister than I am." But that motto of his spoke his opinion.

Well; war proclaimed! and I am near sixty-one; shall I live to see peace again; and what a peace! I endeavour to compose my mind, and call in every collateral aid.—I condemn my countrymen, but cannot, would not divest myself of my love to my country. I enjoy the disappointment of the Scots, who had prepared the yoke for the Americans, and for our necks too. I cannot blame the French whom we have tempted to ruin us: yet, to be ruined by France!—There the Englishman in me feels again. My chief comfort is in talking to you, though you do not answer me. I write to vent my thoughts, as it is easier than brooding over them, but allow that it is difficult to be very tranquil when the navy of England is at stake. That thought annihilates resentment—I wish for nothing but victory, and then peace, yet what lives must victory cost! nor will one victory purchase it. The nation is so frantic, that success would intoxicate us more; yet calamity, that alone could sober us, is too near our doors. Resignation to the will of Heaven is the language of reason as well as of religion, when one knows not what would be best for us. It is a dilemma to which the honest are reduced; our gamesters are in a worse situation. The best they can hope for, is to sit down with the *débris* of an empire. What a line they have drawn between them and Lord Chatham! I

believe it was modesty made them not attend his funeral. Will the House of Brunswick listen again to the flatterers of prerogative? My time of life, that ought to give me philosophy, dispirits me. I cannot expect to live to see England revive. I shall leave it at best an insignificant island. Its genius is vanished like its glories, one sees nor hero nor statesman arise to flatter hope. Dr. Franklin, thanks to Mr. Wedderburne is at Paris, every way I turn my thoughts, the returns are irksome. What is the history of a fallen Empire? A transient satire on the vices and follies that hurried it to dissolution. The protest of a few that foretold it, is not registered. The names of Jefferies and two or three principals satisfy the sage moralist who hurries to more agreeable times. I will go to bed and sleep if I can, pray write to me; tell me how you reconcile your mind to our situation. I cannot. Two years ago I meditated leaving England if it was enslaved. I have no such thought now. I will steal into it's bosom when my hour comes, and love it to the last.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, July 19, 1778.

In one of your unanswered letters (I am ashamed to look at its date to say which, for I have three before me) you talk of my having finished my third book and

of my having been ill, neither of which are true, though I thank heaven only for the falsehood of the last. The truth is, I shewed Mr. Nicols (when he was at York) an exordium written I believe above five years ago, which I believe you have seen, and I turned a slight cold into a sickness to avoid doing the hospitable honours of my post in too great a degree, for *entre nous* that said Mr. N. (but I beg it may go no farther for the honour of the cloth) drinks like any fish, though perhaps you have not discovered it, and it is happy for him that Mr. Gray cannot. Now both this poetical communication and this plea of sickness were mere subterfuges to avoid something worse, i. e. hearing the eternalities of his foreign tour, and saving myself from a morning headach. Yet either your having mentioned my finishing the book, or this wonderful fine weather, or a new bower (already half covered with woodbine) which I made only two months ago, and in which I now write this letter—one, or all of these causes collectively have actually made me resume the work, and I do verily believe that I shall get the whole of it into a readible condition by the time we meet at Nuncham, which I hope will be in September.

Pray ask Madam du Deffand whether Rousseau really died of eating strawberries, and in the meantime do not commit any fruit debauches of the same kind. You are apt to sin in this way, or if you do, take St. Paul's advice and "use a little wine for your stomach's sake" and your often gout infirmities. I do not wish you to

do the honours to Nichols in claret, that I did in port, yet as far as half a pint may go, or a third of a bottle, especially after your raspberries, I hold to be salutary.

Nothing can be so provoking as this fine weather, it comes on purpose to convince one that one's country is the finest climate in the world, just when one should be learning to forget that it is one's country. Last year I would have suffered it to be a province of France with ten times the complacency. I console myself at present with thinking it is too good for those that govern it, and therefore the better it is the greater will be their loss; but what do I gain by that? Aye there's the rub! a rub that takes the skin off one's very shin bone.

Pray do you think it possible to procure me one of the prints of Lady Di's drawing of the Dutchess of Devonshire. I should think you might have interest enough with the designer to obtain it. I hear the plate is in the possession of the Dutchess of Marlborough, if you succeed pray bring it with you to Nuneham.

We are in the ton here I can assure you. An old maid in a neighbouring village from which she hardly ever stirred, is broke for 6000 pounds; she had no visible way of spending it but in turning ivory.

I expect Giardini here sometime next month in order that he may comprehend the full meaning of the words he is to set. I am clear if he will but be docile,

which he promises to be, that he will do it more justice than any of our English composers.

I have taken again to my old size large paper, and the consequence is that I cannot fill it; no matter, say you, "I have had full enough, and will suffer you to conclude yourself

my most faithful servant,"

W. MASON.

END OF VOLUME I.

LONDON: PRINTED BY W. NICOL, 60, PALL MALL.

ILLUSTRATIVE NOTES.

ILLUSTRATIVE NOTES.

PAGE 2.

Life of Lord Herbert of Cherbury. See Walpole's Letters to G. Montague, p. 346—349, for an account of this book, and his opinion of it. See also Retrosp. Review, vol vii. p. 317—331. Reprinted at Edinburgh, 1807, with preface by Sir Walter Scott; and again, 1826, with Letters written at the French Court. See Walpole's Misc. Letters, vol. iv. p. 340, in the dedication, and p. 431 in the preface, and pp. 478—460; also, vol. vi. p. 13. See MS. Letters of Lord Herbert, in Kemp's Losely Papers, p. 347—359. There is a note in Life of Isaac Walton, 1797, p. xxxiii., containing an account of an interview between Lord Herbert and Jeremy Taylor when the former was dangerously ill. "It is plain to me," writes Dr. S. Parr to Mr. C. Butler, "that Lord Herbert more than doubted the truth of Christianity; but he was a learned, an acute, a virtuous, and a pious man; and besides all this, he was an enthusiast—a credulous enthusiast." See 'Butler's Reminiscences,' vol. ii. p. 382.

PAGE 5.

Castle of Otranto. There is an opera *buffa* by Voltaire, called 'Le Baron d'Otrante,' which he gave to M. Grétry,

the musical composer. The name of this place is wrongly pronounced in England. The Italians throw the accent on the first syllable, *O*tranto, shortening the second. This Romance, we find, was attributed by the public to Gray. See Walpole's Misc. Letters, vol. v. p. 13.

PAGE 7.

'Siege of Calais,' a tragedy by Charles Denis, transl. from the French of de Belloy, with historical notes, 1765. See Biog. Dramatica.

PAGE 7.

Your two Comedies. The names of these comedies, which are still preserved in the manuscript of the author, are:

1. 'The Surprise,' a comedy, in five acts, written in November, 1761. Scene, Barbadoes.

2. 'The World of To-day,' a comedy, in five acts;

> "* * * * shoot folly as it flies,
> And catch the manners living as they rise."—POPE.

written in 1761.

Besides these comedies, Mason wrote:

3. 'The Indians,' a tragedy, in five acts. "The scene," he writes, "of this play lies in Zaragua, one of the five kingdoms in the Isle of Haiti, afterwards called by the Spaniards Hispaniola. The destruction of this kingdom (on which this tragedy is founded) happened in the year 1505, the year when Isabella, the wife of Ferdinand, of Spain, died, and about thirteen years after Christopher Columbus, the discoverer of the New World, first landed on the island."

4. Mason also privately printed, at York, 'Œdipus,' a tragedy, in five acts, began by the late William Whitehead, Esq., Poet Laureate, and finished by M. Mason, M.A., 1705 (a private edition).

Despreaux Art. Poet. Chant 3d:

"Il n'est point de sergent ni de monstre odieux
Que par l'art imité, ne puisse en plaire aux yeux."

Of this play, Lord Harcourt, in his manuscript correspondence with Mason, says: "This morning, your 'Œdipus' was sent to me by Mr. Stonehewer, and I gave up my morning walk that I might enjoy the pleasure of reading it without interruption. You appear partial yourself to this piece, and truly I cannot wonder; as I think it one of the very best plays I ever read. There are no fillings-up, nor any languor; the principal characters are always in their character, and admirably discriminated; and in a word, I think it the best constructed drama I have seen. The second act is a master-piece, and full of interest, which is seldom the case in English plays, &c."

PAGE 10.

Hoyland. The poems of the Reverend Mr. Hoyland were reprinted by Mr. Parker, 1808. (Collated with the best editions). The first Edition, I believe, was in 1763. The Strawberry Hill Edition in 1769. The 'Ode on Rural Happiness' was printed at Edinburgh in 1703.

PAGE 10.

A dozen Letters of Pope to Miss Blount. Letters of the late Alexander Pope, Esq., to a Lady, never before published, 1769. The advertisement says: "These letters, besides

the *naïveté* of the style, the quick sallies of an ingenious mind, and the graver observations of reflection and judgment, discover the writer's heart to have had a more amiable susceptibility, and *to be tinctured more with goodness than his other writings of this sort do.* It may be proper just to mention, that the originals of these letters are in Mr. Dodsley's possession." In the 'Poem to a Lady on her Birthday, 1723,' enclosed in Letter v. p. 31, the third line has a variation from the printed edition:

"Not with those toys the 'woman-world' admire."

Ed. printed 'the female-world.' And the last four lines are also different, *ex. gr.*:

"And ah! (since death must that dear frame destroy),
Die by some sudden ecstacy of joy.
In some soft dream may thy mild soul remove,
And be thy latest gasp, a sigh of love."

PAGE 14.

On Sir F. Delaval, See Gray's Letters (Ed. Ald.) vol. iii. p. 77.

"7th. The Hon. Sir Francis Blake Delaval, K.B., in the 48th year of his age."—(Obituary of 'Gentleman's Magazine' for August, 1771).

"The two natural children of whom Sir Francis Blake Delaval is said to have left a fortune of £10,000 each, are a son and daughter, by the celebrated Miss la R—he."

"The late Sir Francis Blake Delaval, though he engaged in popular measures, was but little confided in by the Bill of Rights Society. Mr. Wilkes deemed him a spy of the Court; others deemed him such, however a weak one he might be; and hence it was, that in all the opportunities

which presented, of obtaining Sir Francis a seat in Parliament, particularly for Westminster, where he was much better known than Sir Robert Bernard, he was not once thought of as a candidate by the party."

"A correspondent observes, that the late Sir F. B. Delaval (very impartially speaking) was of little credit to any party, either public or private."

"We hear by the death of Sir Francis Blake Delaval, an estate devolves to his brother, Sir John Delaval, of £4000 per annum. He has likewise left in specie £36,000."

(The four preceding paragraphs are all from the 'Public Advertiser' of Monday, August 12th, 1771.)

PAGE 17.

Spence. A parallel, in the manner of Plutarch, between a most celebrated man of Florence, and one scarce ever heard of in England, by the Reverend Mr. Spence. 'Parvis Componere Magna,' Virg. 1758 (printed at Strawberry Hill). Warburton in one of his Letters to Hurd, May 20, 1752, in his usual slashing style, calls Spence 'an extreme poor creature.'

PAGE 22.

Dr. Brown. The Master of Pembroke College, and friend of Gray, the poet. See Gray's Works (Ed. Ald.) vol. iv. p. 196, and 'Chatham's Correspondence,' vol. iv. p. 311. He died 1784.

PAGE 24.

Wharton. Walpole means T. Warton's (the Laureate and Poet) 'Life of Sir Thomas Pope,' Founder of Trinity

College, Oxford, 1772. This family was collaterally related to Mr. Pope, the poet, see p. 426. Walpole has spoken of this work with too much disparagement of its merits. In his preface, the Author says with justice: "On the whole, I may venture to affirm, that I have at least attempted to make my work as interesting as possible. My materials have not been of the most brilliant kind; but they are such, as have often enabled me to enliven and embellish my narrative, by presenting pictures of ancient manners, which are ever striking to the imagination."

PAGE 26.

Sir W. Jones. Poeseös Asiaticæ Commentarium Libri sex cum Appendice. Subjicitur, Limon seu Miscellaneorum liber. Auctore Guil. Jones, A.M., 1774. In the Proemium, p. ii—vi. is a very affectionate and elegant tribute of praise to his learned Master, Robert Sumner, 'fuit enim vir si quisquam alius,' &c.

PAGE 30.

Lord R. The Marquis of Rockingham, from whom Mr. Walpole obtained his celebrated silver bell, in exchange for some coins. This bell, which excited so much curiosity at the sale at Strawberry Hill, I saw in 1849, at the sale of a solicitor's effects in Strafford Place, it sold for, I think, £70 or £80. See Strawberry Hill Catalogue, p. 157 and p. 38, for an account of it, and 'Walpoliana,' p. 116.

PAGE 32.

On Whittington and his Cat. In the play of the 'Nabob,' a comedy, 1773, Act 3rd, Foote has introduced Sir

Mathew Mite, on his being elected in the Antiquarian Society, reading a disquisition on 'the great Whittington and his no less eminent Cat, in which disquisition four material points are in question,' &c. See Walpole's 'Short notes of his Life,' vol. iv. p. 356. Correspondence with Horace Mann.

PAGE 32.

Mallet. I suppose that Walpole's allusion to Mallet dying of the first effusion of his loyalty, refers to his 'Truth in Rhyme,' where the King and Lord Bute are highly praised: This poem was remarkable for the imprimatur prefixed to it:

> "It has no faults, or I no faults can spy,
> It has all beauty, or all blindness I."
> "Imprimatur," &c.—CHESTERFIELD.

It is dedicated to the Duke of Marlborough, and was printed in 1761.

PAGE 33.

Argentile and Curan. 'Argentile and Curan,' a legendary drama, in five acts, written in the old English model, about the year 1706.

> "This is nor comedy, nor tragedy,
> Nor historie."
> Vide Beaumont and Fletcher's prologue to the 'Captain.'

The story, Mason says, is taken from an old narrative poem, called, 'Albion's England,' written by W. Warner, and is to be found in 'Percy's Reliques of Antient English Poetry,' vol. ii. p. 233, but is here much more altered than was

customary with our old dramatists. See 'Mason's Works,' vol. ii. p. 209, and 'Cradock's Memoirs,' vol. iv. p. 236.

PAGE 35.

Addendum. These lines were to be inserted in the 'Heroic Epistle,' where they are now to be found.

PAGE 37.

'Sketches and Characters.' The copy of this book in the British Museum has the name of W. Musgrave stamped therein, and the extract is filled up in red ink as that below; the title is 'Sketches and Characters of the most Eminent and most Singular Persons now Living,' by Several Hands: vol. i. 8vo. Bristol, 1770.

Page 37: "Of Sir Edward Walpole. This gentleman is the *only* surviving *son** of the greatest statesman this kingdom ever knew, and he inherits all his father's private virtues."

PAGE 43.

Dr. Wharton was not satisfied with the portrait of Gray, which Mason prefixed to his volume, as appears from a MS. letter of his at Aston; and Lord Harcourt thought the engraving so dark, that it made him look like a Moor. (*do MS.*)

'The Duel,' a play, by William O'Brien, acted at Drury Lane, 1772. 8vo. 1773. This piece deserved more success than it met with. It was taken from 'Le Philosophe sans le Scavoir,' of Sedaine, and was acted only one night. See 'Biographia Dramatica.'

* Mr. Hor. Walpole is still alive.

PAGE 54.

Macpherson's Homer. The 'Iliad' of Homer translated into prose, 2 vols. 4to. 1773, a second edition in 1773.

PAGE 54.

My Lord of Chester, 1773.

Dr. Markham was Bishop of Chester at that time, and succeeded Dr. Keene in 1771, as preceptor to his Royal Highness, and was advanced to York 1776. See 'Brown's Catalogue of Bishops.'

He is introduced into the 'Dean and Squire:'

> "Then grave as Pope and gruff as Turk,
> Pedantic schoolmaster—like York.
> * * * * *
> Yet why, Sir, treat mild Markham thus,
> His grace, you know, is one of us."

Being opposed in his political opinions to Walpole and Mason, at a time when party ran high, he was often the subject of their satire. Walpole, in his letters, sometimes altered the orthography of his name, and wrote Mark-him; but Bishop Markham, in the well-informed editor of the 'Memoirs of George the Third,' has found a judicious and able defender. He was a very elegant and correct scholar. See the 'Carmina Quadriges-simalia,' for some classical productions that have called forth praise from the master of a rival school, in Dr. J. Warton's 'Essay on Pope.'

PAGE 62.

Sir Thomas Wyatt. In Walpole's short notes of his Life (vide 'Letters to Sir Horace Walpole,' vol. iv. p. 356),

he says, "In July wrote the 'Life of Sir Thomas Wyatt,' No. II. of my edition of 'Miscellaneous Antiquities.'"

It would appear that this transcript of Sir Thomas Wyatt was made by Gray. A folio volume of his (Gray's) transcripts was in Mr. Mason's hands, out of which one paper alone, the speech of Sir Thomas Wyatt before the Privy Council, was published in the second number of Lord Orford's 'Miscellaneous Antiquities;' but as I understand from a note in Dr. Nott's edition of 'Lord Surrey,' very imperfectly. 'Life of Gray,' Ald. edit. p. xliii. See Chalmer's Life of Sir Thomas Wyatt, in 'British Poets,' vol. ii. p. 363. Nott's 'Life of Surrey,' vol. ii. p. lxiv. "When there was so little taste for MSS. which Mr. Gray thought worth transcribing, and which was so valuable, need one offer more pearls?"—'Walpole's Miscellaneous Correspondence,' vol. v. p. 236.

PAGE 65.

Mr. Trollope's Letters. Mr. Mason here gives the poem on the Alphabet to Mr. Trollope. This poem was, for the first time, printed in the volume which contained the correspondence of Gray and the Rev. N. Nicholls, from Gray's Autograph, in the Strawberry Hill Collection; in which Horace Walpole asserted, that though Gray never owned it, he was convinced it was his. A few omissions deemed necessary were made in printing the poem.—In Walpole's letter of May 22, 1773, he says: "I return you Mr. Trollope's verses, of which many are excellent; and yet I cannot help thinking the best are Gray's, not *only as they appear in his writings*, but as they are more nervous and less difficult than the other." Gray's MS. copy was destroyed by the gentleman who bought it at Strawberry Hill; and

the transcript which I made, and from which I printed the poem, is probably the only one existing.

PAGE 65.

Barillon's Memoir. In addition to what has been written on this subject in Mr. Fox's History and elsewhere, see a note in the Correspondence of the Emperor Charles V., published in 1850 by the Rev. Mr. Bradford, from letters (quoted from the Memoirs of Madame de Pompadour) from an English Minister and Cardinal Fleury. "I pension half the Parliament to keep it quiet; but as the King's money is not sufficient, they to whom I give none are clamorous for a war. It would be expedient, therefore, for your Eminence to remit the three millions to silence these barkers. Gold is a metal which here corrects all ill qualities in the blood: a pension of £2,000 a-year will make the most impetuous warrior in Parliament tame as a lamb," &c.

PAGE 66.

A Fragment of Mr. Gray's of a History of Hell. This MS. of Mr. Gray's is not now to be found among the MSS. of Mason at Aston.

PAGE 67.

Junius. The mention of Junius occurs in Walpole's Works, so far as my knowledge extends, in the following places:

1. Letters to Lady Ossory, vol. i. p. 14, 24, 47.
2. Letters to Sir Horace Mann, vol. ii. p. 62, 115, 173.
3. Letters, Collective Edition, v. p. 230, 269, 270.
4. Memoirs of George III. vol. iii. p. 354, 383, 401; vol. ii. p. 442.

It will be sufficient to quote the passages in the Memoirs, as bearing more directly on the subject in dispute.

PAGE 354.

The celebrated and unknown writer, Junius, threw his firebrands about among so many combustibles, but aimed them chiefly at the head of the Duke of Grafton.

PAGE 363.

The celebrated Junius published an infamous attack on the same Duke (Bedford) on the insult he had received in Devonshire; by justifying which, the writer gave a riot the air of premeditated assassination. Sir W. Draper, a brave officer, attached to the Duke and Lord Granby, who had been abused by the same author, but not of sound intellects, published with his name a challenge to the dark satirist, which the latter answered without parts, and without any manly spirit.

PAGE 401.

These many essays towards an insurrection were crowned by the unparalleled remonstrance of Junius to the King, the most daring insult ever offered to a Prince; but in times of open rebellion, and aggravated by the many truths it contained, nothing could exceed the singularity of this satire, but the impossibility of discovering the author. Three men are especially suspected: Wilkes, Edmund Burke, and William Gerald Hamilton. The desperate blindness of the author in attacking men so great, so powerful, and some so brave, are reconcileable only to the situation of Wilkes; but the masterly talents that appeared in these writings were

decidedly superior to his abilities. *Yet in many of Junius' Letters an inequality is observed, and even in this remonstrance, different hands seem to have been employed.* The laborious flow of style, and fertility of matter, made Burke* believed the real Junius; yet he has not only constantly and solemnly denied any hand in these performances, but was not a man addicted to bitterness, nor could any one account for such indiscriminate attacks on men of such various descriptions and professions. Hamilton was most generally suspected. He, too, denied it—but his truth was not renowned. The quick intelligence of facts, and the researches into the arcana of every office, were far more uncommon than the invectives. And men wondered how any one possessed of such talents could have the forbearance to write in a manner so desperate as to prevent his ever receiving personal applause for his writings: the venom was too black not to disgrace even his ashes. To this the editor adds in a note: "The evidence of Sir Philip Francis being the author of Junius has been assumed by an eminent lawyer, who took no part in the controversy, to be such as would be held conclusive before a jury on a question of FACTS." In the following passage, Lord Campbell permits us, through the glass of a metaphor, to be acquainted with his opinion on the subject: "There appeared in the 'Daily Advertiser,' a very able paper, signed *Zeno*, in defence of Lord Mansfield, against all the charges Junius had brought against him, which was supposed to have been written by Lord Mansfield himself, which only drew forth a new and similar diatribe, in the shape of a letter to Zeno from

* See on this point, a long and most interesting letter, from Burke to Dr. Markham, which is printed in 'Burke's Correspondence,' 4 vols. Edited by Lord Fitzwilliam.

Philo-Junius, and all hope of refuting or punishing him was abandoned as hopeless. At last 'the great boar of the forest,' who had gored the King, and almost all his Court, and said to be more formidable than any 'blatant beast,' was conquered—not by the spear of a knight errant, but by a little provender held out to him, and he was sent to whet his tusks in a distant land;' *vide* Lord Campbell's 'Lives of the Chief Justices,' vol. ii. p. 492. "In the beginning of the year 1772, he (Francis) made a treaty with the Government, and for ever disappeared," ditto, p. 490. Alluding to Lord George Sackville's *dying* interview with Lord Mansfield at his seat, Stoneland, the same biographer observes: "It has been supposed that Lord Sackville's object was, by a dying declaration, to remove from Lord Mansfield's mind all suspicion of the truth of the story, then very generally circulated, that he was *the author of the Letters of Junius.*" Whether such a suspicion had existed, or how far it was removed, I am unable to explain, *for Lord Mansfield always observed a studied silence respecting the much agitated question of the authorship of these libels. He must have formed a shrewd conjecture as to the identity of his assailant,* but like his opinion on the Middlesex election, *it died with him.*"—p. 549.

PAGE 70.

Lady Russell's Letters. These Letters, printed in 1748, from the originals, by Thomas Selwood, who lived in Lady Russell's family, and dedicated to the Duke of Bedford. Other editions have followed. "The amiable author of a Life of Lady Russell," says a writer in the 'Quarterly Review,' "herself a lady of exquisite literary taste, confesses the many grammatical errors and other defects in ortho-

graphy of Lady Russell's Letters."—Vide Quarterly Review, No. CLXV. III. p. 601.

PAGE 72.

Mr. Nicholls. The Rev. Norton Nicholls, Rector of Lound and Bradwell, in Suffolk, the friend and correspondent of Gray and the Octavius of the 'Pursuits of Literature.' A Memoir of him was printed by Mr. Mathias, and since republished in the Aldine Edition of Gray, with his Correspondence. Walpole mentions him with respect, in a letter to Sir Horace Mann, vol. ii. p. 210. Mr. Nichols is still spoken of with a full remembrance of his accomplishments and talents, by a few persons belonging to the county in which he resided; his musical attainments are particularly remembered.

PAGE 74.

Lord Cork's Letters. Letters from Italy, in the years 1754 and 1755, by the late Right Honourable John, Earl of Cork and Orrery, published by John Duncombe, M.A. &c. 1773. See Dr. Johnson's account of Lord Orrery, in 'Boswell's Tour to the Hebrides,' p. 240, and 'Sheridan's Life of Swift.'—For Letters from Lord Orrery, in the British Museum, see 'D'Israeli's Curiosities of Literature,' vol. ii. pp. 208—220.

PAGE 78.

Goldsmith has written a comedy—'She Stoops to Conquer,' printed in 1772. Home's 'Alonzo,' acted at Drury Lane, 1773. 'Alzuma,' by A. Murphy, 1773. (1778, in 'Baker's Biog. Dram.') This and the last-mentioned play had their nine nights' existence, and then were heard of no more.

PAGE 94.

Mr. Cambridge. Richard Owen Cambridge, of Twickenham, author of the 'Scribleriad,' his chief production. The fault in the design seems to be, that the object of Scriblerus' pursuits is represented as actually attainable. It has not been observed that parts of canto ii. are taken from Sarasin, 'La Descente des Bouts Rimés;' see Œuvres, p. 117. Whitehead, in a letter to Mason, says: "O. Cambridge wishes for your opinion of the 'Scribleriad,'" 1735. Mason answers: "I thought its merit chiefly consisted in the *tout ensemble*, and the first book not the best."—MS. Letters. In Miss Burney's Memoirs of her Father, &c. vol. ii. p. 342, are some verses of his on Gibbon's falling into the Thames with a humorous rebuke of his to Capability Browne, who was exulting about the miraculous improvement of the scenery of England, which he had effected by his clumps and artificial rivers, &c., when Cambridge expressed a hope that he should *die before Mr. Brown*. "Why, Mr. Cambridge?" said the landscape gardener. "Because I should wish to see Heaven before you have improved it."—In his Letters to Lady Ossory, vol. ii. p. 413, Walpole praises Mr. Cambridge's excellent verses, called 'The Progress of Liberty.' They were printed by Mr. Nicholls in a newspaper called 'The Times,' and were addressed to a young lady. They are as happy a composition in poetry as 'Bonner's Ghost.' And in his advertisement to Lord Whitworth's account of Russia, printed at Strawberry Hill, 1759, Walpole says: "Mr. Cambridge's known benevolence and his disposition to encourage every useful undertaking has made him willing to throw open this magazine of learning to whoever is inclined to compile a history, or elucidate the transformations of an empire—almost unknown even to its

contemporaries." — See character of O. Cambridge, in G. Hardinge's 'Life of D. Wray,' p. 88.

These verses, praised by Walpole, are printed in Chalmers' edition of Cambridge's Poems; they run thus:

"Now in haste over Sweden and Denmark she wanders,
To see how her pupils are acting in Flanders;
From thence to Great Britain she travels with speed,
And perched on the pillar in famed Runnymede,
She surveys the whole island and finds it in awe
Of no power upon earth, but of justice and law,
With no wrongs to redress and no rights to restore,
She has all she can wish and she asks for no more."

PAGE 96.

Lord Nuneham's garden. This garden was laid out by Mason. The Countess of Harcourt erected an urn to his memory, in the flower-garden, with an inscription, celebrating his simple manners, piety, and steady friendship.

PAGE 107.

West's Ode on the Queen, in Dodsley's Miscellany. In the second volume of Dodsley, is 'A Monody on the Death of Queen Caroline,' by Richard West, Esq., son to the Chancellor of England, and grandson to Bishop Burnet, p. 276. There is a quatrain in this ode which resembles almost verbatim, one in Gray's Elegy:

"Ah me! what boots us all our boasted power,
Our golden treasure and our purple state;
They cannot ward the inevitable hour,
Nor stay the fearful violence of fate."

It would seem, that West possessed the property of these lines as right owner; for Walpole says, p. 109: "The

Churchyard was, I am persuaded, posterior to West's death at least three or four years, as you will see by my note. At least I am sure that I had the twelve or more first lines for him for above three years after that period, and it was long before he printed it.'

PAGE 109.

Crebillon's Ecumoire. L'Ecumoire Histoire Japonoise. 'Tanzai et Neardane,' a romance, with a pretended Chinese original, was composed, it is said, to ridicule the disputes between the Jansenists and Molinists. In the Marquis d'Argen's 'Jewish Spy,' an account of it will be found. The author was confined in the Bastille on account of it. See Peignot's 'Dict. des Livres Condamnés;' it is to be found in vol. ii. of Crebillon's Collected Works, 7 vols., 1779. See also Chaudon's 'Dictionnaire Historique,' which says: "On ne sait à quoi tend cet ouvrage, ni quel en est le but."

PAGE 110.

A pretty little drama. 'Palladius and Irene,' a drama, in three acts. 8vo. 1773. Baker's Biog. Dram. This is all that is given, without mentioning the author's name.

PAGE 112.

Mr. Palgrave, an intimate friend of Gray, and of Mason. His name often occurs in 'Gray's Correspondence. He was a person, as a gentleman informs me who remembers him visiting at Mason's, of humorous, agreeable, and lively conversation. He was small in person, and in Lord Harcourt's MS. correspondence, is generally called 'Le petit Palgrave.'

PAGE 116.

"If you know a dirtier and less considerable man than J * * * n." I presume that Mason alludes to his 'Epistle to Dr. Shebbeare,' which came out in 1774; and probably to the second line:

> "Oh! for a thousand tongues; and every tongue
> Like Johnson's, armed with words of six feet long."

Mason again attacked Johnson in the 'Archæological Epistle to Dean Milles,' both in the preface and in the tenth stanza:

> "Yet giffe thou sojournd in this earthly vale,
> Johnson atte thee had shown no nether stynge,
> Hee cravent the ysterven dothe assayle,
> Butte atte the quyck ne dares his venome flynge," &c.

and in the 'Ode to Mr. Pinchbeck:'

> "Poor Doctor Johnson, I'm afraid,
> Can gain but metaphoric aid;
> His style is case-harden'd grown."

But the great attack was reserved for the 'Life of Whitehead.'

PAGE 125.

Old Hermes. James Harris, of Salisbury, is here alluded to: a man of learning and philosophy. I possess a volume of his correspondence on various subjects of Greek literature, and particularly some relating to the page in Warton's 'Theocritus,' which was cancelled when going through the press by the desire of Bishop Lowther; the cause being a passage in St. John's Gospel, which Toup had illustrated by an epigram in the 'Anthologia.' Walpole mentions him

again in vol. ii. p. 179, in terms of contempt ill-deserved; and in his 'Memoirs of George the Third,' vol. i. p. 225, where the only alteration I would suggest in the note of the Editor, would be "deeply learned," for "accomplished," as we have had no scholar since him who has studied so profoundly, or imitated so successfully the *æsoteric* writings of the Greek philosophy; although I cannot but agree with the learned author of the 'Life of Aristotle,' "that Harris's three treatises are an attempt to come much nearer to the Platonic Dialogue than that of Berkeley's 'Hylas, and Philonous;' and in our judgment, a signal failure." 'Life of Aristotle,' by J. W. Blakesley,' p. 125.

Gibbon says: "The most elegant commentary on the categories or predicaments of Aristotle may be found in the philosophical arguments of Mr. James Harris (London, 1775), who laboured to revive the study of Grecian literature and philosophy." See also just praise of Harris from a high quarter, viz., Dugald Stewart in his work on the 'Active and Moral Powers,' vol. ii. p. 360; Dr. Warton in his edition of Pope has given several extracts from the *unpublished MSS.* of Harris; and I may add, also, a very high eulogy on this somewhat neglected scholar by the greatest polymathist of the present age;—"Harris," says Mr. Coleridge, "has written on the means of acquiring a just taste, with the precision of Aristotle, and the elegance of Quinctilian." See Biog Liter., ii. p. 37.

It may not be perhaps generally known, that at the end of the novel of David Simple are some dialogues by Harris; and Dr. Johnson mentioned to Madame d'Arblay two scarce and clever works of Harris's, called 'Fashion,' and 'Much-Ado,' full of sportive humour. There is also a poem by him called 'Concord,' in 'Woty's Poetical Calendar,' part xii. p. 53.

PAGE 127.

That fine lyric fragment of Mr. Gray's, The 'Ode on Vicissitude,' as Mason named it.', Langhorne in a Letter to Mrs. Hannah More writes: "I have read something that Mason has done in finishing a half-written Ode of Gray. I find he will never get the better of that glare of colouring: 'that dazzling blaze of song,' an expression of his own ridiculous enough, which disfigures half his writings." See Life, vol. i. p. 23.

PAGE 130.

The History of Charles Fox and Mrs Grieve. For a more particular account of this singular adventure, see Walpole's Letters to Lady Ossory, vol. i. p. 102—108. "You have read in Fielding's Chronicle, the tale of the Honourable Mrs. Grieve; but could you have believed that Charles Fox could have been in the list of her dupes? Well, he was! she promised him a Miss Phipps, a West Indian fortune of £150,000; sometimes she was not landed, sometimes had the small-pox. In the meantime, Miss Phipps did not like a black man. Celadon must powder his eyebrows; he did, and cleaned himself. A thousand Jews thought he was gone to Kingsgate to settle the payment of his debts. Oh, no! he was to meet Celia at Margate. To confirm the truth, the Honourable Mrs. Grieve advanced part of the fortune—some authors say £160, others £100; but how was this to answer to the matron? Why, by Mr. Fox's chariot being seen at her door. Her other dupes could not doubt of her noblesse or interest, when the hopes of Britain frequented her house. In short, Mrs. Grieve's parts are in universal admiration,

whatever Charles's were. I went last night to see Mrs. Hartley. She is beautiful indeed, but has not quite so much sense in her countenance as Mrs. Grieve, and I think will never be half so good an actress." See p. 276, and 'Fielding's Chronicle,' 1773, p. 429, and 1774.

PAGE 137.

I have read Mr. Warton's book. After some observations on Warton's History, Walpole adds: "But Gray's and your plan might still be executed." This plan, instead of being chronological as Warton's, was to follow a sketch drawn out by Pope, and divide the English poets into schools. In a MS. book of Miscellanies at Aston, Mason has drawn out the plan, and Gray's has been given in the Aldine Edition of his Works, vol. i. p. cxix. See also Spencer's Anecdotes of Pope, ed. Malone, p. 81—145, and Mathias's Gray, vol. ii. p. 8. I possess a character of Samuel Daniel, the poet, by Gray, written with the utmost delicacy of judgment and critical taste, intended for this work. Mr. A. Chalmers in his Life of T. Warton, has given a Letter from Gray to Warton, with a sketch of his own plan of a Poetical History, before Warton's was published, in which he says it was in some measure taken from a scribbled paper of Pope. *Vide* British Poets, vol. xviii. p. 80. There is a most objectionable classification of the poets in Dr. J. Warton's Essay on Pope. *Vide* Ded. vol. i. p. 12. See also a Letter from T. Warton to Garrick, June 28, 1769, in which he mentions Gray's intention of writing a History of English Poetry." See Garrick's Correspondence, vol. i. p. 355.

Warton's work has met with a most able editor, as the valuable preface and notes will show. On the want of *cor-*

rectness in Warton's quotations, see Mr. Guest's 'History of English Rythm,' vol. i. p. 294, vol. ii. p. 135. On the curious mistake by Warton of Διδαχαι Regis Arthuri, for Rarthuri, see 'Quarterly Review,' No. xlv. p. 153.

PAGE 140.

Lord Chesterfield's Letters. See Walpole's 'Noble Authors,' p. 535, for the character and works of this noble and accomplished writer; also his 'Memoirs of George the Second,' vol. i. p. 51, &c. The 'Letters of Lord Chesterfield to his Son,' were sold by the wish of the latter to Dodsley for £1575, including autographs and copyright. In the new edition of 'Lord Chesterfield's Letters,' by Lord Mahon, the following characters are printed for the first time: 1. That of Dr. Arbuthnot; 2. Lord Bute; 3. Lady Suffolk; and 4. the Mistresses of George the First; besides many new and original letters to Chesterfield's confidential friend, Dayrolles. Gibbon writes to Mr. Holroyd, in 1773: "I forgot to tell you, I have declined the publication of 'Lord Chesterfield's Letters.' The public will see them, and upon the whole, I think, with pleasure, but the family was strongly bent against it; and especially on Deyverdun's account, I deemed it more prudent to avoid making them my personal enemies." The reader, on the subject of this graceful and witty writer, may be referred with advantage to the Quar. Review, 1825, September, and Edinb. Review, No. clxiii. Art. v. In a Latin letter to his son, vol. i. p. 164, one unhappy Anglicism has escaped him.

PAGE 143.

Lexiphanes. Lowndes, in his 'Bibliographical Manual,' attributes this work to Dr. Kenrick, as did Sir John Hawkins. others gave it to Edwards; but we learn from Boswell's 'Johnson,' that its author was one Campbell, the son of Professor Archibald Campbell, of St. Andrew's, a Purser in the Navy. Dr. Anderson very truly says: "It is so overcharged as to have neither resemblance nor pleasantry." It is intended to ridicule the style of Johnson, in prose, and of Akenside, in verse. Walpole has made a mistake, in asserting "that Gray's removal from Peter House, and other idle stories, were printed in an absurd book called 'Lexiphanes.'" There is no mention whatever of them there; but in another work by the same author, called 'The Sale of Authors,' they are to be found. This book is written by the same author, A. Campbell, printed in 1767; and at pp. 9, 19, and 21, are some satirical anecdotes, then current, relating to Gray's removal from Peter House. Nor was Gray's fear of fire so imaginary as to be without any prospect of being realized, for in one of his MS. Journals I find the following entry: "Fire in the College at half-past two this morning: it was subdued in about an hour and a half. 18 Jan, 1768."

PAGE 146.

Kate Macgraham. Mrs Macaulay. An interesting account of the habits and manner of life of Kate Macgraham, may be found in a letter from Thomas Hollis (under the title of *Pierce Delver*) to the Rev. T. Lindsay, published in Mr. Belsham's Life of him, App. p. 390. It appears by this that she had £1000 a volume for her history. Mr.

Hollis adds, "The other day I paid her a visit at her house in Berners Street, Oxford Row, on a particular occasion, by her desire. That house, a new one, she has bought, and furnished handsomely. She had the air of a princess—out-*Cornelised* the *Cornelisians*, and had the frank Bath air on her countenance. It seems she keeps two servants, in laced liveries, treats cleverly and elegantly, and, in short, author, or fine lady—surpasses all her sex!" See p. 391.

PAGE 149.

Mr. James. Haughton James, a West-India proprietor, and a man of fashion: formed two libraries, sold the first to Robert Heathcote, Esq., and the second to Mr. Thomas Payne, the bookseller.

PAGE 151.

Fitzpatrick's Town Eclogue. 'Dorinda,' a Town Eclogue, printed at Strawberry Hill, 1775, small 4to.

Fitzpatrick was also the author of the 'Lyars,' an Eclogue, in the 'Rolliad,' which is considered to be the most finished of all the productions in that clever, and witty, and satirical production of the associated wits. See p. 197, and 'Chatham Correspondence,' vol. iv. p. 227.

PAGE 152.

Old Garrick. Meaning Lord Chatham.

PAGE 161.

Bob at White's. See vol. ii. p. 132, for the epigram—

"When Maçreth served in Arthur's crew," &c.

Sir Robert Mackraith had been Head-Waiter at the Cacao,

where he was known as 'Bob.' See 'Clubs in London,' vol. i. p. 145.

PAGE 163.

The couplet. This passage alludes to some alterations which Mason and Walpole made in the concluding couplet of Gray's satirical verses on Lord Sandwich, (*vide* p. 160), or rather to some lines which they wished to substitute for the original. Both the attempts were great failures, and both the subject and the execution preclude their insertion in this work.

PAGE 164.

My Nabob cousin. Mr. Verelst purchased a large portion of Lord Holderness's estate at Aston, See p. 214, part of which is still in possession of his family.

PAGE 165.

'Braganza.' This tragedy is by Robert Jephson, printed in 1775. The plot resembles parts of 'Venice Preserved.' For criticisms on his dramas, see Campbell's 'Life of Mrs. Siddons,' vol. ii, p. 73, 105, 113, 158. Walpole was very partial to him, and thought highly of his dramatic powers. See his letter to Lady Ossory on this play, written a few days before this to Mason, vol. i. p. 167, and see a letter to Jephson on his tragedies, in 'Walpole's Miscell. Letters,' vol. v. pp. 467 and 479; consult the Editor's note, p. 467; to which I may make the following addenda: "Jephson had extraordinary brilliancy of wit. He was for a considerable period the salaried Poet Laureat of the Vice-regal Court. He lost both place and pension by an untimely exercise of his

wit when dining at Lord Cloncurry's. The dinner was given to the Marquis of Buckingham (Lord Lieutenant), who happened to observe, in a mirror the reflexion of Jephson in the *act of mimicking him.* He immediately discharged him from the Laureateship!" See 'Lord Cloncurry's Memoirs,' p. 256.

PAGE 167.

Linnæus. This is allusive to what Mason had mentioned in his Memoir of Gray, that in the latter part of his life Gray always had an interleaved Linnæus on his table. This beautiful monument of his knowledge, his industry and his taste, is now in the possession of Mr. Penn, who purchased it at the sale of Gray's library. Walpole says: "Mr. Gray often vexed me by finding him making notes on an interleaved Linnæus, instead of practising on his lyre." See 'Letters to Lady Ossory,' vol. ii. p. 449.

PAGE 168.

Miniatures. See Catalogue of Sale at Strawberry Hill, n. 42, p. 115. "The following five exquisite miniatures by Oliver, from the celebrated Digby collection. Sir K. Digby was the patron of Oliver, and they are considered the *chefs-d'œuvre* of this celebrated artist. No. 31. Lady Lucy Percy, mother of Lady Venetia Digby, in a black hat and ruff. *It was considered by Horace Walpole to be the most perfect miniature in the world.*" They were purchased chiefly by Miss Burdett Coutts and Mr. Holford. No. 56 fetched £241 10*s.* and No. 24, £178; No. 31 was sold for £105.

PAGE 179.

Tyrwhitt. As a contrast to Mr. Tyrwhitt's *tedious notes* to Chaucer, I give the opinion of two persons, themselves proficients in this branch of learning. "The last edition of the 'Canterbury Tales' of Chaucer, a work which, in respect of accuracy and learning, is *without a rival,* at least in any commentary on an English poet." (Malone's Life of Shakespeare, p. 643). "This masterly performance, in which the author has displayed *great taste,* judgment and sagacity, and the most familiar knowledge of those books which peculiarly belong to a commentator on Chaucer." (Warton's 'Hist. of Engl. Poetry,' vol. i. p. 90). See Mr. Guest's 'History of English Rythms' for his opinion of Tyrwhitt's merits and defects, vol. i. p. 34.

PAGE 180.

Colman. These satirical odes were owned by Colman and Lloyd, and are to be found in their collected works, respectively called 'Odes to Obscurity and Oblivion.' See Colman's Works, vol. ii, p. 272. Dr. J. Warton says, that one of the authors (Colman) owned to him that he repented of the attempt. Warton's Pope, vol. i. p. 136; and see Colman's Works, vol. i. p. xi. "These odes were a piece of boy's play with Gray's schoolfellow Lloyd, with whom they were written in concert."

PAGE 182.

The Œolian Harp. The reviewer in the 'Critical Review,' vol. iv. p. 167, mistook the Αιολη μολπη (the Œolian lyre —the lyre of Pindar) for the Œolian harp, the instrument

invented by Kircher, about 1649. See Mason's Memoirs, sec. 4, Lett. 26.

PAGE 185.

Mr. Falconer subsequently edited the Oxford edition of 'Strabo,' which was attacked by Mr. Payne Knight, in a celebrated article in the 'Edinburgh Review.' Many of Gray's 'Geographical Lucubrations' were printed by Mr. Mathias, in his edition of Gray's Works, from the MSS. at Pembroke College.

PAGE 185.

Mr. Burgh, afterwards Dr. Burgh, the intimate friend and executor of Mason, and editor of the 'English Guardian,' a person of much talent, learning, and accomplishments. In composing his Answer to Lindsay, a friend of his mentioned to us, that he passed several successive nights without sleep, persevering in his task, and being so devoted to the important subject he had undertaken. See an account of Mr. Burgh, LL.D., in 'Gentleman's Magazine,' an. 1809, and high praise of him, in a letter from Mr. G. Swan, of York, to Mason. He wrote 'Scriptural Consolations;' and see the 'Garrick Correspondence,' vol. i. p. 636. Dr. Burgh has been described to me by a gentleman who was well acquainted with him, as a person of learning, talents, and wit, with very pleasing powers of conversation. In the miscellaneous writings of his which I have seen in manuscript, he appears to have been a very diligent reader, and an able and acute critic.

PAGE 186.

Cœlestinettes. A musical instrument, invented by Mason. It is not, however, to be found among his other works of art

still remaining at Aston; alli hs music having, I believe, been bequeathed to a friend. However, by the favour of Miss Alderson, a MS. description of it, in Mason's writing, dated Aston, March 30, 1761, is now before me. It consists of ten pages, and enters into all the minute particulars of its formation. The beginning is as follows: "For the proper preparation of the horse-hair of the bow used in performing on the cœlestinette; the clearness of the tone of the instrument, the facility of its touch, and, in short, everything that makes any degree of execution practicable upon it, all depends principally on that part of it which is employed in making it sound; namely, the single horse-hair attached to the moveable ruler or bow, which is drawn backwards and forwards over the strings by the left hand of the performer, while his right is employed in pushing down the keys. To perform this properly, four circumstances must be particularly attended to. 1. The size of the hair; 2. its length; 3. its texture; 4. and principal, its due degree of rosin," &c. The instrument is still remembered at Aston as resembling in shape the old spinette or harpsichord. Mr. Southey says: "Mason performed decently on the harpsichord, but in painting he never arrived even at a degree of mediocrity; and in music it was not possible to teach him the principles of composition, Miller and others, at his own request, having in vain attempted to instruct him."—See the 'Doctor,' vol. ii. p. 265; but Mr. Miller was a person, whose account of Mason, which appeared in his 'History of Doncaster,' is not to be received without much allowance. A more faithful estimate of Mason's knowledge of music is to be found in the Reverend T. Tebb's 'Choral Service of the Church,' p. 387, and *he* is a writer of standard authority. Dr. Burney says: I communicated a few MS. sheets of these Memoirs to my old

and much honoured friend, Mr. Mason, for whose learning, judgment, and genius, I have always had the highest respect." See 'Life of Metastasio,' vol. i. p. 109.

PAGE 191.

The Correspondents. 'The Correspondents,' an original Novel, in a series of Letters.

> "Shake not thine auburn locks at me,
> Thou canst not say I did it."

A new edition, 1776. This work is said to be written by Lord Lyttleton. Walpole mentions it in his Letters to Lady Ossory, vol. i. p. 172, and seems to consider it as genuine; but at p. 175 he adds: "I did believe the letters genuine, and that they passed between the old Lord and his daughter-in-law, before she was so. Now it seems the executors deny their authenticity, &c."

PAGE 192.

Mr. Wood. The original Edition of the 'Essay on Homer,' by R. Wood, Esq., was published in 1775, edited by Jacob Bryant. For an acute examination of this book, see 'Critical Observations on Books Ancient and Modern,' (by Thomas Howes, of Norwich), vol. i. p. 1—79.—This very learned person is mentioned by Dr. S. Parr, in his Spital Sermon, as Τοῦ Δηλίου κολυμβητοῦ. R. Wood was Under-Secretary of State. Wilkes complained of him in the affair of General Warrants. See Walpole's Letters to Lord Hertford, p. 66. He is buried in Putney Church, where is his monument. He died 1771, aged 51 years. The inscription was composed by Lord Orford. See 'Chatham Correspondence,' vol. ii. p. 206—209, for Letters from Wood to Lord

Chatham. In vol. i. p. 432, is an account of his writings, and vol. ii. p. 206, on his 'Essay on Homer.' See also Walpole's 'Memoirs of George III.' vol. i. p. 362, vol. iv. p. 3, p. 105 and p. 345. His opinion of him was unfavourable, and in one place he says that he "was full of guile, dark and interested." He was Secretary to Lord Weymouth.

PAGE 197.

"I resigned my chaplainship. (See p. 26.) As the Parsonage is in Yorkshire, and as my temporal concerns are also in Yorkshire, a London journey at a stated time is often inconvenient, and will be (when I advance more in years) constantly disagreeable. *On this account, and this only, I mean to relinquish the chaplainship,* and I would wish to do it at any time, when his Lordship (Lord Hertford) thinks it most eligible." Mr. Chalmers, in his 'Life of Mason,' p. 312, says: "He is said to have given so much offence at Court, that he found it convenient to resign his chaplainship."

PAGE 199.

Madame de Sévigné's Letters. "In his (Gray's) Letters he has shown the descriptive power of a poet, and in new combinations of generally familiar words, *which he seems to have caught from Madame de Sévigné,* (though it must be owned he was somewhat quaint), he was eminently happy."—Life of Sir James Mackintosh, vol. ii. p. 178.

PAGE 217.

Lady Luxborough's Letters. The passage on liking the verses, *on a country churchyard well,* occurs in Letter LXVII.

of Lady Luxborough, p. 266. I possess a copy of these Letters with Walpole's MS. Notes, and opposite to this passage he has written in the margin—'Excellent taste to admire the Scribleriad and Shenstone, and like Mr. Gray *very well.*' See more about her in Walpole's Letter to Sir Horace Mann, vol. ii. p. 353, and Misc. Letters, vol. i. p. 175, 209, 211, vol. ii. p. 195. vol. vi. p. 345, and Letter to Lady Ossory, vol. i. p. 175.—Sterne's Letters, (says Mrs. Barbauld) are paltry enough; so are Lady Luxborough's, which we ran through in the course of an afternoon. See Barbauld's Works, vol. ii. p. 8. This lady, half-sister of Lord Bolingbroke, would be worth a note had we room to give it.

PAGE 222.

A wight called Thomas Astle. Thomas Astle, Esq., Keeper of the Records in the Tower, and Author of the 'Origin and Progress of Writing,' 1784. 4to. See Account of him in 'Annual Register,' 1803, p. 526. He died, aged 69, at Battersea. He wrote several papers on the Archæologia. His library was purchased by the Royal Institution, and is now in their rooms in Albemarle Street.

PAGE 223.

That wig-block, the Chancellor. Walpole's assertion, that the Lord Chancellor burnt *all* his Correspondence with Pope is not true, for I have seen and read Pope's Letters, which are still existing, and preserved at Lord Bathurst's house, near Cirencester.

PAGE 228.

Anstey. Alluding to the great inferiority of Mr. Anstey's later poems compared to the 'Bath Guide.'

PAGE 228.

Lord Melcombe's Epistle. A Poetical Epistle addressed to Sir Robert Walpole, 1726. *The same epistle addressed to Lord Bute.* It is inserted in Dodsley's Miscellanies, vol. vi. p. 129.

PAGE 228.

Whitehead's 'Variety.' See Whitehead's Poems, vol. iii. p. 3, Edited by Mason, with a Memoir of the Poet. The Laureate received once a scratch from Junius, Letter L. to the Duke of Grafton. "In this respect alone I have the advantage of Mr. Whitehead. His plan, I think, is too narrow. He seems to manufacture his verses for the sole use of the hero, who is supposed to be the subject of them; and lest his meaning might be exported in foreign bottoms, sets all translation at defiance." Mr. Coleridge says: "Whitehead addressed to youthful poets a Poetic Charge, which is perhaps the best, and certainly the most interesting of his Works," *vide* Biog. Literaria, tom. i. p. 222.—Churchill in his 'Ghost' is very severe on Whitehead, vol. ii. p. 5, and p. 161, and Gibbon did him the honour of criticising one of his odes. *Vide* 'Miscellaneous Works,' vol. ii. p. 660.

PAGE 233.

Mr. Masters. He wrote some remarks on Walpole's 'Historic Doubts' in the Life and Reign of Richard the Third; see 'Archæologia,' ii. p. 195, 1770. He wrote also on other antiquarian subjects. He was born 1718, and died 1798.

PAGE 235.

Cumberland's two odes. These odes were printed in 1776, with a dedication to his friend, Romney, the painter.

1. Ode to the Sun.
2. Ode to Dr. Robert James.

In the first, a compliment is introduced to the author of the 'Bard.'

> "Ah! where is he that swept the sounding lyre,
> And while he touched the master string,
> Bad ruin seize the ruthless king,
> With all a prophet's fire?" &c.

In the latter, similar praise is bestowed on 'Cortex Peruvianus:'

> "Meanwhile the magic drug at strife
> With the detested foe of life,
> Runs to the heart, mounts to the brain,
> And visits each corrupted vein," &c.

PAGE 241.

Chandler's 'Travels in Greece.' On the merits and defects of Chandler's 'Travels in Greece,' see Quarterly Review, No. cxxvii. p. 79. There is an account of these Travels in the British Museum, enriched with the MS. notes of M. Revell, the architect, and one of the companions of the learned traveller. These notes correct many small mistakes. Chandler died in Dec., 1809, leaving a continuation of his work on the 'Troad,' and a collation of many MSS. of Pindar made abroad.

PAGE 243.

Dr. Chapman. See 'Gray's Letters, vol. iii. p. 254; ed. Ald. where Dr. Chapman's death is thus described: "Our friend D * * * (Dr. Chapman, Master of Magdalen College), one of its nuisances, is not expected again in a hurry. He is gone to his grave with five fine mackarel, large, and full of roe, in his belly. He eat them all at one dinner; but his *fate* was a turbot on Trinity Sunday, of which he left little for the company beside bones. He had not been hearty all the week; but after this sixth fish, he never held his head up any more; and a violent looseness carried him off. They say he made a very good end;" to Dr. Clarke; also, p. 259, in a letter to Dr. Warton: "Did I tell you that our friend Chapman, a week before he died, eat five huge mackarel (fat, and full of roe) at one dinner, which produced indigestion; but on Trinity Sunday he finished himself with the best part of a large turbot, which he carried to his grave. Poor man! he never held his head up after," &c.

PAGE 254.

S. Jenyns. Jenyns' book on the 'Proof of the Truth of Christianity,' from the internal evidence, has received high and various praise, but not without some exceptions to the argument. See Bishop Porteus' 'Exhortations to Good Friday,' p. 15, who mentions—"that high reputation which on account of its general good tendency it has justly acquired." Mr. Benson in his 'Hulsean Lectures,' vol. i. p. 220, calls it a "Small, but valuable Treatise," but objects that he casts the power and credibility of *miracles* too much into the shade. Mr. Wilberforce, in the first chapter of his 'Practical Christianity,' praises the work, but mentions some

marks of the writer's love of paradox. M. le Maistre, in his 'Soirées de St. Pétersbourg,' vol. xi. pp. 14—181, says: "Je ne connais pas d'ouvrage, plus original et plus profondement pensé." I may refer the reader who wishes to enter further on the nature of the argument of this work, to the Quarterly Review, No. lxxvi. art. 1.; to Professor Smythe's 'Evidences of Christianity,' p. 290; and to H. More's 'Character of St. Paul,' vol. ii. p. 30.; and to her Life, vol. i. p. 309. However, it must not be passed over, that Lord Brougham designates it as "S. Jenyns' most *injudicious* defence of Christianity." See 'Natural Theology,' p. 295.

His other work mentioned here—'Inquiry into the Origin of Evil'—is only an additional failure, an attempt in which no one has succeeded. Gray spoke of it in terms of great contempt. But what shall we say to the solution attempted by the great writer, mentioned by Dr. Warton, on Pope's 'Essay on Man?' Voltaire joined with Hume in saying that the *only solid method* of accounting for the origin of evil, consistently with the other attributes of God, is *not to allow that his power is infinite.* "Sa puissance est très grande mais qui nous a dit qu'elle est infinie?" I almost agree with Lord Brougham, who has written on this subject, in thinking of Archbishop King's elaborate work, "that a more complete failure to overcome a great and admitted difficulty; a more unsatisfactory solution of an important question, is not to be found in the whole history of metaphysical science." See his 'Dissertations,' vol. ii. p. 17—45. It was S. Jenyns' 'Treatise on Government and Civil Liberty' that gave rise to Mason's poem of the 'Dean and Squire.'

PAGE 255.

Bentley's Drawings. These drawings were rewarded with the fine lines which Gray addressed to him. See H. Wal-

pole's Works, vol. ii. p. 447; and Gray in Ald. edition, p. 153.

"In silent gaze the tuneful choir among," &c.

PAGE 262.

Digby. The Honourable Robert Digby died in 1726, and is buried in the church of Sherbourne, in Dorsetshire, with an epitaph written by Pope. We may, in the present day, join in Walpole's lament, that he did not inform himself of many things he should so like to know of Pope,—among the rest. However, I possess in my copy of Pope's works many blanks filled up with the names of the persons designed, on Walpole's authority.

PAGE 278.

Long Sir Thomas Robinson. There were two Sir Thomas Robinsons alive at the same time. The one here mentioned was called *Long* as a distinguishing characteristic. This gave occasion to a witticism of Lord Chesterfield, which I found among the Walpole MSS. Some one told Lord Chesterfield that *Long* Sir Thomas Robinson was very ill. "I am sorry to hear it."—"He is dying by *inches*." "Then it will be some time before he dies," was the answer. In Mason's 'Epistle to Shebbeare,' he is called "The Petronius of the present age." Sir Thomas Robinson's Letters were left to an apothecary, who married his natural daughter, with an injunction to publish all, including Lord Chesterfield's.

PAGE 285.

Combe's 'Diaboliad.' Mr. Combe died in Lambeth

Road, aged eighty-three; see a Memoir of him in 'Gentleman's Magazine,' vol. xciii. p. 180, and a list of his Works, in vol. xciv. p. 643; see also H. Smith's 'Comic Miscellanies,' vol. i. p. 17; 'Life of Southey,' vol. ii. p. 20. He left the following inscription, for a piece of marble over his grave:

"Vir fuit nec sine doctrinâ
Nec sine sermonum ac morum suavitate
Vixit nec sine pietate erga Deum
Nec sine honesta de Numine ejus opinione
Nec vero sine peccatis multis
Nec tamen sine spe salutis
A Domino clementissimo impetrandæ."

which we trust no injudicious friend to his fame or his latinity has erected. The 'Diaboliad' we believe satirized principally the Luttrell family.

Some of his works are as follows: 'Letters of Valerius on the State of Parties,' 8vo. 1804. 'The Devil upon Two Sticks in England,' 1st edition, no date, 6 vols. 12mo.; 2nd edition, 1810. 'History of Westminster Abbey,' 2 vols. 4to. 1812. 'The Tour of Dr. Syntax in Search of the Picturesque,' a Poem, 1812. 'Six Poems, illustrative of Engravings,' by Her Royal Highness the Princess Elizabeth, 4to. 1813. Papers entitled 'The Modern Spectator,' in Ackerman's Repository of Arts. All these he printed anonymously.—Watt, Bib. Britannica.

PAGE 294.

I suppose the letter is now published. A letter to W. Mason, A.M., Precentor of York, concerning his edition of Mr. Gray's Poems and the 'Practices of Booksellers,'

by a Bookseller, 1777, 12mo. Mr. Chalmers, in his 'Life of Mason,' says, p. 315: "Nor are his prosecutions of Murray, for taking about fifty lines from his 'Life of Gray' into an edition which that bookseller published, much to the credit of his liberality, especially as he refused to drop the prosecution, when required to name his own terms of composition. An account of this case, cited in Carman *v.* Bowles, before the Master of the Rolls, 1786; 2 Browne, Chancery Reports, p. 85. An injunction was given Feb. 13, 1777, and made perpetual as to the four Odes, July 13, 1779.

PAGE 300.

See Mr. King. Edward King, F.S.A., died April 16, 1807; see 'Chalmers' Biog. Dictionary.'

PAGE 305.

Epistle to Shebbeare. 'An Epistle to Dr. Shebbeare, by Malcolm Macgregor, of Knightsbridge, Esq., author of 'The Heroic Epistle,' to Sir William Chambers, &c. 1774. Mason, in his advertisement, says: He does not call this '*heroic*, as he did 'the Epistle to Sir William Chambers.' "It would be unpardonable in me not to discriminate between a Comptroller of His Majesty's Works and the needy scribbler of a newspaper, between a placeman and a pensioner, a Knight of the Polar Star and a broken apothecary." It is very inferior to the 'Heroic Epistle' in the choice of the subject, and in the liveliness and grace of the satire and in the pleasantry of the allusions.

PAGE 316.

You ask the history of Burgoyne. Burgoyne's battles and speeches will be forgotten, but his delightful comedy of 'the Heiress' still continues the delight of the stage, and one of the most pleasing of dramatic compositions. Horne Tooke, who was a great reader of the drama in all modern languages, says: "'The Heiress,' one little morsel of false moral excepted, is the most perfect and meritorious comedy, without exception, of any on our stage."—See 'Diversions of Purley,' p. 412, 8vo. The author of the 'Pursuits of Literature' says of it: "It is the production of a man of fashion, delicacy, wit, and judgment," p. 79. See more of Burgoyne, in Walpole's Letter to Lady Ossory, II. pp. 256, 301; in his Miscellaneous Correspondence, vol. v. p. 369; in Jesse's 'Letters of G. Selwyn,' vol. i. p. 310. Mr. Forster, in his 'Life of Goldsmith,' says, that "three of the characters of the fashionable general are stolen from this very 'Sister' of poor Mrs. Lennox, p. 499. There is a print of Burgoyne in Wright's 'House of Hanover,' vol. ii. p. 32. The author of a very clever book, 'the Old Playgoer,' says: "Our modern stage affords us no fine lady; Burgoyne's 'Heiress' is the nearest approach to it," p. 148. Burgoyne was one of the contributors to the 'Rolliad,' in one of the prefatory odes and in the Westminster Guide. See his Life, p. 33.

PAGE 323.

'The Roman Sacrifice.' A tragedy by William Shirley, acted at Drury Lane, 1776, not printed. This piece was performed only four nights, and was very coldly received. Vide Baker's 'Biog. Dramatica.' Mr. Shirley wrote no less

than fifteen plays, of which five are not printed. He wrote in the 'Daily Gazetteer,' under the name of 'Lusitanicus.'

PAGE 328.

'The Battle of Hastings.' A tragedy, by Richard Cumberland, 1778. It was said of this play, that the title was a misnomer, for the only *battle* was in the title-page. There is a very severe article on the author in the review of this play, in Baker's 'Biog. Dramatica,' which *might* have proceeded from his *friend*, George Stevens; at least the concluding admonition is in his style: "Poets do not seem to be aware that a stock of ideas, like a fund of wealth, by gradual subtraction, will be at length exhausted."

PAGE 328.

Home's 'Alfred' was acted at Covent Garden, 1778. It was the last production of its author, and was so coldly received by the public, that it was performed only three nights.

PAGE 335.

Burke's Parody of Burgoyne's talk. This speech of Burke's is not given in the publication of his 'Speeches in the House of Commons,' in 4 vols. 1806. There is no speech in that year, 1778, between February 6th, and March 23rd.

PAGE 355.

Pennant. Pennant's 'Tour in Wales,' first published in Chester, Feb. 1st. 1778. The continuation, in 1781, was added to it, and the whole collected and published in

3 vols. 1810. They are illustrated with numerous plates, and contain much curious information on antiquarian subjects, and natural history. Walpole mentions Pennant again in 'Miscell. Correspondence,' vol. v. p. 319, and vol. vi. p. 97, 111, 117. Mistakes are certainly to be met with in his various and discursive publications, for some of which, in the 'Tour to Scotland,' see 'Edinb. Review,' No. xlxvii. p. 155. Dr. Johnson used to praise him very highly, and his brother antiquary, Sir R. C. Hoare, "thought his style of writing the most desirable for tourists to adopt."

PAGE 360.

Hardwicke. 'Miscellaneous State Papers from 1501 to 1726,' 2 vols. 4to. 1778. "Vetustis novitatem dare, novis auctoritatem, obsoletis nitorem, obscuris lucem, dubiis fidem." Plinii N. H. On a singular letter in this work, from Prince Charles and the Duke of Buckingham to King James, "on a picture of the Infanta's drawn black and white, and presented by little, pretty Toby Mathews," see Walpole's 'Anecdotes of Painting,' vol. iii. p. 250, note.

Lord Hardwicke, as is well known, was no favourite of Walpole's, and Mason has once or twice sprinkled a few drops of satire on him. I give here an Epigram of his from his MS., occasioned by Lord Hardwicke's and Lord Lyttleton's verses on one another.

"While every freeman in the nation,
Burgess and cit of each vocation,
In Pitt's just praises shine;
Thy meagre virtue, modest peer,
Hangs dangling by a single hair
In Hardwicke's hitching line.

Indeed, my Lord, you're much to blame
To risk so rashly your good name,
'Tis true his rhymes are terse.
Yet honest folks, your Lordship knows,
So seldom trust a lawyer's prose,
They'll ne'er believe his verse."

In the 'Dean and Squire' his name also appears.

"Your wit, Lord Hardwicke deigns to own,
Surpasses every wit's in town,
And none e'er doubted Hardwicke's taste
Whoe'er were bid to Hardwicke's feast."

PAGE 361.

'The Old Baron.' This very dull work, of which the design and execution are equally defective, was written by Mrs. Clara Reeve. It is dedicated to the daughter of Richardson, and went through numerous editions. She calls it "the offspring of the 'Castle of Otranto,' in which the defects might be avoided, and the keeping, as in painting, preserved."

PAGE 361.

Mrs. Barbut's Fragment. Walpole probably alludes to 'Don Bertrand: a Fragment,' printed in Aikin's 'Miscellanies' and written by Mrs. Barbauld.

END OF VOL. I.

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